HM®

Oh, Sleeper
Relient K
Austrian Death Machine
Bless The Fall
The Almost
Black Label Society
Texas In July
Paramore + Switchfoot Posters

THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE

FLYLEAF

0 74470 79599 5 11

November, December 2009 • *Issue #140*
$3.99 USA / 4.50 CDN

The Almost

Monster Monster

In Stores and Online Available November 3, 2009

thealmost.com myspace.com/thealmost facebook.com/thealmost

℗ & © 2009 Tooth & Nail Records. toothandnail.com virginrecords.com

IN STORES AND ONLINE FALL 2009 FROM

Tooth & Nail AND solidstate

Welcome To The Masquerade
THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH

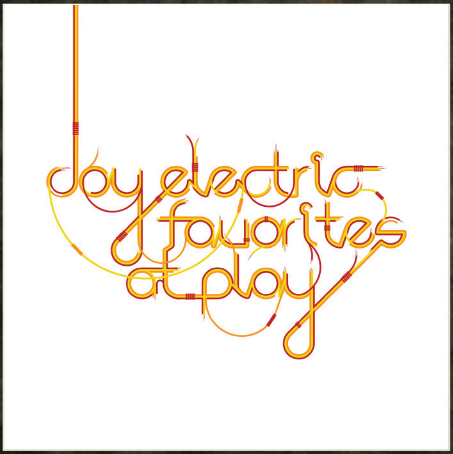
Thousand Foot Krutch
Welcome To The Masquerade
In Stores and Online Now
myspace.com/thousandfootkrutch

INHALE EXHALE
bury me alive

Inhale Exhale
Bury Me Alive
In Stores and Online Now
myspace.com/inhaleexhale

the letter black
BREAKING THE SILENCE

The Letter Black
Breaking The Silence
In Stores and Online Now
myspace.com/theletterblack


joy electric
favorites
at play

Joy Electric
Favorites At Play
In Stores and Online Nov 3, 2009
myspace.com/joyelectric

anberlin
The Anthology

Anberlin
The Anthology
In Stores and Online Nov 17, 2009
myspace.com/anberlin

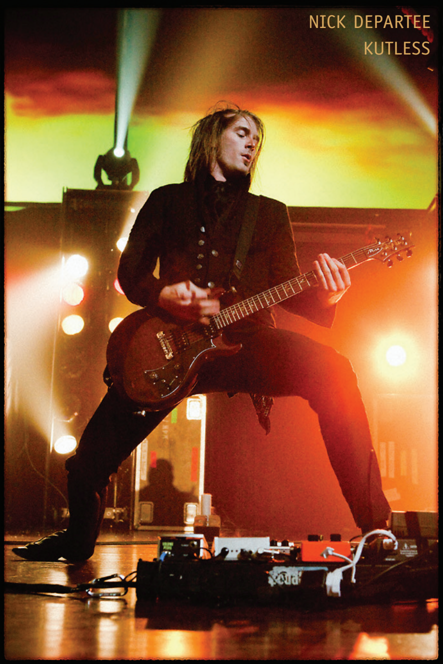
THE CRUCIFIED
THE PILLARS OF HUMANITY

The Crucified
The Pillars Of Humanity
In Stores and Online Nov 17, 2009
myspace.com/thecrucifiedofficial

Tooth & Nail Records solidstate © 2009 Tooth & Nail Records / Solid State Records

ROCK WITH A PURPOSE

NICK BAUMHARDT
TFK


NICK DEPARTEE
KUTLESS

NOAH HENSON
PILLAR

JUSTIN COX
FIREFLIGHT

GLENN DRENNEN
FIREFLIGHT

WENDY DRENNEN
FIREFLIGHT

photos by Max Crace

kutless.com
pillarmusic.com
thousandfootkrutch.com
fireflightrock.com

ELECTRICS 010
10-46 SET GBL
ghs
GUITAR
BOOMERS
ROUNDWOUND ELECTRIC GUITAR STRINGS
40-95 LIGHT
SET L3045-B LONG SCALE
ghs
BASS
BOOMERS
ROUNDWOUND ELECTRIC BASS STRINGS

ghs strings

ROCKTRON
TECHNOLOGY FOR GUITARISTS

ghsstrings.com 800/388-4447
rocktron.com 800/432-ROCK
GHS Music Products 2813 Wilbur Ave. Battle Creek, MI 49037

#1 UNSIGNED CHRISTIAN BAND
- PureVolume.com

DIVIDED BY FRIDAY

BRINGS YOU THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT

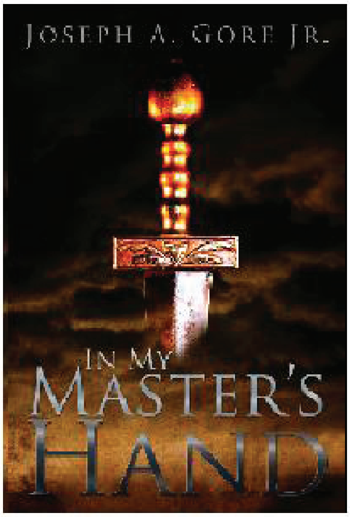
HOLY NIGHTS & SNOWBALL FIGHTS

available NOV. 17th

DIVIDED BY FRIDAY
HOLY NIGHTS & SNOWBALL FIGHTS

for fans of
RELIENT K
& **ANBERLIN**

www.myspace.com/dividedbyfriday



Darkness covers the land. Its cruel servants rule a subject people.

A lone warrior yet resists the Darkness, waging a war he can neither win nor quit.

A Power that Darkness cannot comprehend calls forth His own servants.

Battle is joined.

In My Master's Hand

An exciting, new fantasy novel by Joseph A. Gore Jr. available now!

Found exclusively on amazon.com®

stickersandmore.com

Custom Merch Since 1995

Your Logo
On Custom
Apparel
Banners
Stickers
Posters
8 X 10s
Buttons
& More

Mix & Match
Apparel

48cnt $12.95ea
72cnt $12.45ea
Sweat Shop Free
Soft Ring Spun

Super Soft
Fitted Tees
72cnt $5.85ea SPECIAL
144cnt $4.95ea
Sweat Shop Free
Free Shipping!

*Includes 1 color imprint & location.

WEB
T-SHIRT SPECIAL
48 pcs
$4.95
each
FREE Shipping

*Includes 1 color imprint & location.

FREE
SHIPPING & SCREENS
ON ALL WEB ORDERS

2x6 Banner $75

WEB STICKER SPECIAL 200qty $38 1.5"x5" size WEATHER PROOF

100 Posters
$65

100 Full Color
8x10s $68

100 Buttons
$39

Major Discounts
On Larger Quantities

1-888-644-7745
info@stickersandmore.com
www.stickersandmore.com

VISA PayPal VERIFIED MasterCard

* Prices subject to change.

American Apparel ★ Gildan ★ Next Level ★ Anvil ★ Gaziani ★ Independent Trading ★ Tultex

BEFORE THERE WAS
ROSALYN

THE FÜHRER: AN ALLEGORY OF A HISTORY OF DECEPTION

BEFORE THERE WAS ROSALYN
THE FÜHRER
AN ALLEGORY OF A HISTORY OF DECEPTION

ONE OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT HEAVY RECORDS OF THE YEAR!

FOR FANS OF: UNDEROATH, DEVIL WEARS PRADA & DEMON HUNTER

VICTORY METAL .com

WWW.VICTORYMETAL.COM/BEFORETHEREWASROSALYN
WWW.VICTORYRECORDS.COM

VICTORY RECORDS

SUB-
SCRIBE
TO HM
MAGA-
ZINE
HM
Oh, Sleeper
Relient K
Austrian Death Machine
Bless The Fall
The Almost
Black Label Society
Texas In July
Paramore + Switchfoot Posters
THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE
FLYLEAF
hmmag.com

From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

AUSTIN, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

It's a good problem, though: there is so much good music out there, it'll make you puke. Well, aside from the mindless odd reference to the best movie of all time (*The Jerk*), there is really no puking going on. But the fan of good music has lots to be happy about these days. In terms of independent artists, I think even if we tripled the amount of space we devote to our "Pick of the Litter" section, we still wouldn't have room to discuss all the worthy bands out there right now.

Whoops! Last issue I had a proofing problem. As you all know, Howard Benson produced the new Skillet (*Awake*) album, not Howard "Vincent." Our apologies for not catching that mistake twice.

Hey! It's that time of year again... It's get-out-your-albums-from-this-year-and-think time. The Readers' Poll is here ... and live ... and online. Please vote and make us all proud that your taste in music rules as much as the tunes do. Go to the following link and vote (but only after you've pulled out your 2009 releases in front of you and really thought about which was your favorite of the entire year):

hmmag.com/2009/10/ivoted

As a way of saying "Thanks" for voting, we're giving all voters a $2 off coupon to use in the HM Mag online store.

SPINNING AT HM NOW

16 HORSEPOWER	*Secret South*	AMAZING classic re-issue on Alt. Tentacles.
UNHINDERED	*Be*	Energetic, flowing worship album.
TEXAS IN JULY	*I Am*	One of the next great PA hxc metal bands.
PACIFICO	*Thin Skin & an Open Heart*	Super solid stripped-down pop. Great stuff.
PUBLIC RADIO	*Sweet Child*	Wonderful, loud, pulsating melodic pop rock.
THE AWAKENING	*Tales of Absolution...*	Ahh, the heaviness! The doom! Bring it on!
HALF-HANDED CLOUD	*Cut Me Down & Count...*	Odd music and fun for the whole family.

REGULAR

Letters 10
Hard news 12
Live report 15
Watch to artists 22

FEATURETTE

Advent 16
Venia 18
Oh, sleeper 20

FEATURE

The almost 24
Bless the fall 28
Switchfoot poster 31
Paramore poster 32
Austrian death machine 35
Flyleaf 38
Relient k 42
Black label society says 45

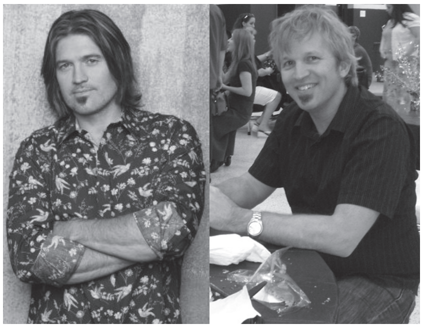
INTERMISSION

Columns 54

REVIEW

Music 49
Indie pick 56
DVD, book, & gadgets 57

Letters to the Edit



BILLY RAY VAN CYRUS?

Doug, this might be an insult or a compliment, but has anyone told you that you kind of look like Billy Ray Cyrus?
–Daniel Garcia, via internet

Ed – Hadn't heard that one before. Both of us had mullets in the early '90s, though.

PDF VERSION OF HM MAG

I love what you guys did with the PDF version. Could you make a PDF e subscription for heaven's metal magazine? I would like to subscribe to that too.
–Steven Downer, via internet

Ed – Glad you like it. Hopefully, you enjoy the webpage/online version, too. I had to do something new and different, because the old method of digitizing the magazine and hosting it online was just costing too much. It's funny to hear a publication say that today: "The online version costs too much to produce!" My priority is print #1, but hope to do a great job with online, too. I'll see about the Heaven's Metal fanzine, also.

ADDICTED TO THAT PODCAST

Hey Doug, I just downloaded, for the first time, the HM podcast. I downloaded all the podcasts. I'm listening to the final minutes of #1. Great podcast. It's nice to have something to hear current stuff that is coming out. I'm 38 years old and don't keep up with it like I did in the late '80s and early '90s. Thanks for the great podcast.
–Joe Myzia, via internet

Ed – Thanks for the encouragement. I just took over the HM Magazine Podcast production, so hopefully they'll still be good. John J. Thompson did a killer job with those.

IS HM A CHRISTIAN MAG?

Hey HM, I love your magazine. However, I am severely confused. I can't tell if your magazine is Christian or not. Because you support bands that are not Christian in the mag. Which I don't care if you do or not. But are bands like Paramore, Killswitch Engage, and Chevelle Christian? Or are you not a Christian magazine?
–Derek Olsthoorn, via internet

Ed – Yes, HM is a "Christian" magazine. People have different definitions of what makes a person, magazine or band "Christian" or not. The name implies "like Christ," so it is a compliment to be called a Christian, even if it's meant as a put-down by a non-believer. Because of differing definitions of what bands are "Christian" or "Christians in a band" or "ministry-focused" and so on, we choose to cover bands that are "of interest" to Christians, which would include professing believers (like the members of Paramore), as well as bands with a believer in the group. Sorry you're confused. I think if you read HM over time, you'll get a better perspective on what I'm talking about. God bless you!

USPS FORM # 3526, STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MGMT, & CIRCULATION

Publication Title: HM | Pub. # 1066-6923 | File Date: 10-1-9

Issue Freq: bi-monthly | # issues annually: 6 | Annual Subscription: $18

Complete Mailing Address: 1660 CR 424, Taylor TX 76574

Complete Mailing Addr of Gen. Biz Office: 1660 CR 424, Taylor TX 76574

Publisher Name & Address: Doug Van Pelt | 205 Janis Mae Drive, Hutto TX 78634

Editor Name & Address: Doug Van Pelt | 205 Janis Mae Drive, Hutto TX 78634

Full Name & Addr: HM Magazine, LLC | 1660 CR 424, Taylor TX 76574

Owner Name & Addr: Doug Van Pelt | 205 Janis Mae Drive, Hutto TX 78634

Tax status has not changed during preceding 12 months.

Extent & Nature of Circulation:	Avg. # Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	# Copies Single Issue (Sep/Oct '09) Published nearest to filing date
Total # of copies (net press run)	9,530	8,500
Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	3,249	2,930
Paid/Requested In-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	0	0
Sales Through Dealers, etc and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	4,209	3,546
Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	209	150
Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	7,667	6,626
Free Distribution by Mail Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	270	271
Free Distribution by Mail In-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
Free Distribution by Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	20	11
Free Distribution Outside the Mail	1,258	741
Total Free Distribution	1,548	1,023
Total Distribution	9,215	7,649
Copies not Distributed	315	851
Total	9,530	8,500
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	83%	87%

Publication of Statement of Ownership is Required. Printed in Nov/Dec '09 issue

Signature:

Signature Date:
10-1-9

HM

EDITOR/PUBLISHER	**Doug Van Pelt**
OFFICE MANAGER	**Charlotta Van Pelt**
MKTG & ADS	**Doug Van Pelt**
INTERN	**Kelly Kettering**
CONTR EDITORS	**Kemper Crabb, Greg Tucker, Chris Wighaman**
E-NEWS HOUND	**Jason Irvin**
MYSPACE COWBOY	**Levi Macallister**
CONTRIBUTORS	**Matt Conner, Keven Crothers, Corey Erb, Dan Frazier, Mark Blair Glunt, Levi Macallister, Dan MacIntosh, Jamie Lee Rake, David Stagg, Jonathan Swank**
COVER PHOTO	**Mark Holthusen**
PROOFREADERS	**Kevan Lee, Levi Macallister, Valerie Maier, Carolyn Van Pelt**
SCRIPTURE	"Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet and worshiped Him." (Matthew 28:9)
MAILING ADDRESS	PO Box 367 Hutto TX 78634
CUSTOMER SERVICE	877.897.0368 service@hmmag.com
FAX	512.535.1827
EDITORIAL	dvanpelt@hmmag.com
MARKETING & ADS	advertising@hmmag.com 512.989.7309
SUBSCRIPTIONS [PRINT]	U.S.A. – $18, Canada/Mexico – $23, Overseas – $28
[DIGITAL / ONLINE]	Everywhere – $6
IF YOU MOVE	Please send us your new address, or you'll likely miss issues from your subscription. Send an email to service@hmmag.com
WRITE US	Letters/email must include full name. All submissions become property of HM Magazine, and may be edited/condensed.
SEND TO	Letters 2 Ed, POB 367, Hutto, TX 78634 | letters@hmmag.com
ANSWERS	hmmag.com/faqsupport
FACEBOOK	facebook.com/HM.Magazine
TWITTER	twitter.com/dooglar
MYSPACE	myspace.com/hmmag

HM Magazine is dependently owned and operated (Psalm 62)

Printed in the U.S.

FUELED BY

MONSTER ENERGY

HM Magazine (ISSN 1066-6923) is published bi-monthly for $18 per year by HM, 1660 CR 424, Taylor, TX 76574. Periodicals Postage Paid at Taylor, Texas and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: HM, PO Box 367, Hutto TX 78634-0367

All contents copyright © 2009. HM contents may not be reproduced in any manner, either whole or in part, without prior written permission.

For retail distribution, please call Ingram Distributors (800) 627-6247

TAKE IT BACK!

ATROCITIES AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 10TH

www.FACEDOWNRECORDS.com

FACEDOWN RECORDS

THE BRAND NEW ALBUM FROM

WRENCH IN THE WORKS

DECREASE / INCREASE

OUT JANUARY 2010

ONWARD TO OLYMPAS

THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME

OUT JANUARY 2010

HARDNEWS

Quick & concise

ONWARD TO OLYMPAS SIGNS

WELCOMED TO FACEDOWN RECORDS

Onward to Olympas has signed to Facedown Records. The label describes the band's sound as "blending progressive metal, straight hardcore, and elements of death metal." Says vocalist/guitarist **Justin Gage**, "We like the challenge of including all the genres that we most enjoy without making a song sound like it is being performed by three different bands." On their new album, *This World Is Not My Home*, recorded with Jamie King (Between the Buried and Me, For Today) Onward To Olympas make sure to bring the intensity, effortlessly melding melodic singing with thick metal-core screams, occasionally bringing a little old school back to the table with crisp gang vocals. The album is polished and impressive, and will be available in January.

PARAMORE'S NEW ALBUM BUZZ

BRAND NEW EYES SET SALES RECORDS

Paramore's new album, *Brand New Eyes*, debuted at #2 on the Billboard 200 and set sales records for its Fueled By Ramen label (and that's just in the USA). The band's first-ever headline date at London's 12,500-capacity Wembley Arena, slated for December 18th, sold out in little more than eight hours. The band's *MTV Unplugged* performance can be seen at mtv.com/music/unplugged. A video to the next single ("Brick By Boring Brick") will be soon shot in Los Angeles and debut soon. The U.S. tour (which they are sponsoring/presenting themselves with their own paramore.net) will include **Paper Route** and The Swellers.

HM
Pillar
Memphis May Fire
Stars Go Dim
Abandon Kansas
Rocketboys
Cornerstone Review
Special "double flip" Issue
THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE
LIVING SACRIFICE

Living Sacrifice push release date back...

The new album from a reunited **Living Sacrifice**, *The Infinite Order*, was postponed just before press time (in time enough for us to flip from a double flip to a single cover this issue). Instead of the proposed November 3 release date, now we'll have to stave our metal hunger until January 26. This will be the band's seventh studio album. **As I Lay Dying** singer **Tim Lambesis** sums it up best, "You can hear Living Sacrifice's legacy in the entire generation of bands who've come after them. And those bands still haven't caught up." *The Infinite Order* was produced in Nashville, Tennessee and Little Rock, Arkansas by the band's longtime friend Jeremiah Scott (The Showdown, Destroy Destroy Destroy). Mixing duties are once again being handled by Andy Sneap (Megadeth, Machine Head, As I Lay Dying), who mixed the band's last album, 2003's *Conceived in Fire.* The band recently taped the music video for the first single, "Rules of Engagement," in Los Angeles. Stay tuned for an early 2010 tour to be announced shortly.

News bullets

Castanets are streaming their new album on the Asthmatic Kitty website. The band will be touring this next year for a good five months, including a stop at SXSW in Austin in March.

August Burns Red are hitting Europe with Bring Me The Horizon and A Day To Remember in late 2009, to be followed with another trek opening for Lamb of God in early 2010.

Right before press time **The Devil Wears Prada** were tapped to host *Headbangers Ball* on Saturday, October 10th. The band will be introducing videos including their own recent one for "Danger Wildman," which was filmed in between shows performing on the mainstage of *Warped Tour* all summer. The band has recently announced they will be co-headlining the *Napalm & Noise Tour* with All That Remains (Support from Story Of The Year and **Haste The Day**). This tour will be the band's first headlining run since May when they crushed 43 sold-out dates in a row.

MAE just released *(M)ORNING* physically in stores late last month after selling out a limited edition run on their tour earlier this spring. The enhanced disc is the first of three separate 8-song collections of music the band is releasing in 2009/10 – *(M)ORNING, (A)FTERNOON,* and *(E)VENING* – and includes a special DVD documentary which explains the evolution of the group's "12 Songs, 12 Months, 1 Goal" campaign. The project evolved from digital to include physical releases via the band's own imprint Cell Records which is now in partnership with Tooth & Nail for distribution.

Alice Cooper has released a brand-new single: "Keepin' Halloween Alive" on iTunes, as a single, or as a Digital 45 with the "Cooperoke" vocal-free version and a bonus digital booklet. In addition to releasing the new single, Cooper is busy hosting his "Nights with Alice Cooper" radio program, now syndicated on more than 100 stations worldwide, and staying on the road with his *Theatre of Death World Tour.*

GET LATE-BREAKING NEWS ONCE A WEEK! SIGN UP FOR THE HM E-MAIL LIST AT HMMAG.COM

Inhale Exhale

BY MATT CONNER

Third time around's the brutal turn, apparently, as Inhale Exhale certainly ups the intensity on their follow-up to last year's *I Swear*. While still retaining their post-hardcore leanings, guitarist John LaRussa tells us the band's ready to scream and riff louder than ever before. And while it might take some fans by surprise, it's a risk worth taking. After all, the band's most comfortable in a heavier skin.

"*Bury Me Alive* is a lot heavier record," says LaRussa. "There's a lot more metal elements and a lot more hardcore, I guess. We still keep the post-hardcore vibe to it, but it's definitely our most brutal record we've done. We decided to take that leap and focus on that avenue, because we felt like that's the best place for us to be creatively. That's just where we're at. I think people will be surprised when they hear it. We've put up a couple videos already from the studio and people have definitely noticed that there's a lot more energy, a lot more dynamics and it's a heavier record."

The harsher direction also brings a need for proficiency with it and the recording sessions for *Bury Me Alive* forced the quartet to hone their craft. "Practically it's got some faster tempos and it's a lot more technical on the guitar and drum side of it. That was more challenging. Also, Ryland [Raus] challenged himself a lot more with his screaming. He pushed himself vocally to go deeper with his screams and where it counts. We were thinking of live dynamics and we wanted to write a song that could make an entire place move."

The change is an interesting turn, considering Travis Wyrick helms the production on *Bury Me Alive*. Usually a change in direction means a change in producers, but LaRussa notes Wyrick handled things perfectly. "Working with Travis is like hanging out with a friend. He's so open-minded and not stuck in any genre. He just loves music, loves to be creative and can bring energy to any project."

Above anything else, LaRussa and the rest of Inhale Exhale – Raus, Greg Smith and Chris Carroll – truly believe in the music they create. So whether people respond to the new sound is secondary to their goal of being pleased with their own efforts.

"There's no guarantee you'll be successful or make a lot of money with your music," LaRussa says. "When I was younger, I thought about that. But at the end of the day, you have to be happy with what you make. And that's what we did with this."

HM Magazine's beloved **Kemper Crabb** received Nielsen ratings for his PBS special, *Downe In Yon Forrest*, that indicate 106 million viewers watched the medieval Christmas special (available on DVD with a bonus interview done by HM editor DVP). Centricity Music just picked up the CD and DVD projects for CBA retail.

The Almost filmed a video for the single "Lonely Wheel," set in a seedy dive bar.

Seabird's sophomore studio project, *Rocks Into Rivers*, hits December 15. The group has jump-started its promotion by debuting some of the new songs live on David Crowder Band's fall 2009 tour. *Rocks Into Rivers* features top-notch production by Paul Moak (Mat Kearney, Sixpence None The Richer) and Matt Hales from Aqualung. The band split its time between Ocean Studios in Los Angeles and The Smokstack in Nashville, honing what brothers **Aaron** and **Ryan Morgan** are calling their most exciting project to date. "For this album I think we wanted to mature both musically and lyrically," says Aaron. "We have families now and are experiencing different aspects of life, and we think that our audience has matured with us as well. We want to continue making songs that inspire people to change and grow. There is a musical progression in these songs, they may be a little less poppy, but at the same they definitely showcase our rock sensibility."

Derek Webb is on a 20-date tour for *Stockholm Syndrome*, and has released a companion DVD documentary of the project, which was a radical departure for Webb, who has left his acoustic, folk/rock roots behind for a sound he describes as "intentionally inorganic."

Canopy Red signed with Nashville-based Creative Soul Records. The band's self-titled debut 5-song EP, produced by Eric Copeland, will be available on November 3rd at iTunes. The Tallahassee, Florida-based band has been compared to such artists as **Relient K**, **Sanctus Real** and **The Afters**.

Barnes & Noble recently expanded *HM Magazine* into more of its stores.

HARDNEWS

Page fourteen

HARD MUSIC CABINET

WHAT HM READERS LIKE IN MUSIC TODAY

01 Headbangers and moshers alike, get ready, Tooth & Nail has just signed one of the heaviest (and in my opinion, one of the best) bands in awhile! They go by the name of **Sent By Ravens**, stemming from the biblical story of the prophet Elijah being fed by ravens in the wilderness. Now I'm not going to lie, when I first heard their name, I doubted their greatness, but my skepticism quickly turned to sheer amazement and awe after I heard the first chords in their song "Trailer vs. Tornado." When the song begins, the guitarists play a breakdown that drags you in right away. As the song continues, it makes it very hard to turn your ears away. By the time the song concludes you will be in a state of shock due to the raw talent of these young men. For a heavy band, however, they have little to no screaming. But before you headbangers and moshers frown upon them and flip the page, Sent By Ravens' lead singer **Zach Riner**'s beautiful melodic voice will lure you in and add a wonderful twist to hard rock as we know it! With meaningful lyrics and a few breakdowns thrown into the mix, there is absolutely no reason for you not to check them out!

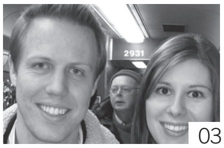
02 When it comes to music, I'm lucky. Or should I say blessed? You see, I get to listen to some great stuff. Not only does the music sound great, but there is even the benefit of lyrics that speak to the soul. Lyrics that help keep me on the straight path. Lyrics that remind me of what is important in this life. Lyrics that help me keep focused on the true God. All this without compromising on the music that really gets me going. Just this week the **77s** reminded me that I follow a "different kind of light." **Apostle** revved me up with "Resurrection Dance" by reminding me the price Christ paid for us and there will be a day "when the saints of God shall be carried away." And **Grave Robber**, in their humorous unique way indicating that being possessed is not a bad thing, when it is the Spirit of God that does the dwelling. I've heard the arguments that Christians make bad art. The artists these folks listen to cannot be the same Christian artists I listen to. Because the Christian music I listen to is not bad art. It is art at its best. Art that is a blessing. We serve a God that cares about art. He cares enough to call folks to make some of this great stuff so that folks like me can be blessed. If you want some of this too, then run to your local Christian store that stocks some of this great art. Or run to your computer to obtain it from your favorite music source. Whatever sources you use doesn't matter, just get it. And be blessed.

03 **Showbread**'s latest, *The Fear of God*, has been spinning on my iPod ever since it released, and every new play reminds me just how great music outside the box can be. There are few common musical motifs in Idaho – just make it good, make it unique, and make it memorable, and we'll like it. Showbread did just that. **U2** has been doing just that for decades, and their greatness is not lost on Idaho music lovers. U2's *No Line on the Horizon*, released in February, still holds the No. 1 spot on the local record store's best seller list, and it might stay there until the megaband pumps out another release. **Family Force 5** has a ways to go before it builds anywhere near the street cred of U2, but the crunk rock/dance pop boys have Idahoans buzzing nonetheless. Regardless of the infrequency of their visits, Family Force 5 is a fave of junior high beatniks and hip twentysomethings alike.

04 There are two bands in the Southeast that have grabbed my attention as of late, **Nine Lashes** and **Cool Reign**. I have seen both bands play twice and each time their performance and stage presence improved greatly. I saw them both at a benefit concert for a local nonprofit organization in Gardendale, AL. **Cool Reign** has a rock/blues type vibe to them. Their guitarist is extremely talented and he does not stand still. He made me tired just watching him jump around while shredding. They have gone through some member changes since the first time I saw them but they still had the same passion and energy. If you enjoy rock music with a blues influence, you should check them out here [myspace.com/coolreign]. **Nine Lashes** plays an aggressive rock style reminiscent of Stavesacre or Pillar. The first time I saw them live they played an awesome show, but their stage presence needed some work. I saw them again one year later and was blown away. They moved all around the stage and pumped up the crowd. It is really cool to see a band grow so much in such a short amount of time. I talked to several of the members after the show and was encouraged by their openness. This band is not after the "Rockstar" status at all. If you are looking for a hard-hitting rock band, then check out Nine Lashes [myspace.com/ninelashes].

01

02


03

04

News bullets

Relient K just embarked on *A Three Hour Tour* with **Copeland** and Barcelona. They will also hit the road for **TobyMac**'s *Winter Wonder Slam tour* on November 19.

Frontiers Records is pleased to announce the European release of the brand new **Mastedon** album, *3*, on November 6. (No, we're not talking the NWOAHM band, Mastodon. We're talking about the early '90s melodic rock group fronted by **John Elefante** (Kansas)).

MxPx is scheduled to tour Japan and Malaysia, but with an "all-star" lineup that features Kris Roe of The Ataris and Chris Wilson of The Summer Obsession accompanying **Mike Herrera**. "We decided to change things up a little for some international dates, due to **Yuri** having another baby recently and **Tom** wanting to be home through the holidays," said MxPx lead vocalist and bassist Mike Herrera. "Chris [Wilson] has been our fourth member for awhile covering on select dates, so he was an easy selection. I asked Kris [Roe] to join in because he's another close friend of ours that plays his own music and I knew he would be a fun addition."

The Fold just released their third studio album, titled *Dear Future, Come Get Me*.

Gwen Stacy have a new album (*A Dialogue*) coming out (10/20) on their new label, Solid State. It was produced by Andreas Magnusson (Haste The Day, Black Dahlia Murder).

Germany's Christmas Rock Night (Dec 4-5) features: **Haste The Day**, **Disciple**, **TFK**, **Showbread**, **Seventh Day Slumber**, **Fireflight**, **Flatfoot 56**, **Since October**, **The Letter Black**, **Secret & Whisper**, **Children 18:3**, **Manic Drive**, **Abandon** and more.

Tooth & Nail Records just signed **Queens Club**, who turned some heads on the *DANCE! RAWR! DANCE! Tour* with **Family Force 5**, Breathe Carolina, Cash Cash & I Rival. Their *The Nightmarer* EP will be available on the road as well as iTunes and zambooie. The band features ex-members of **The Chariot**.

Strike First Records signed **Saving Grace**.

LIVE REPORT

Revelation Generation Festival 2009

September 4 - 5

BY DOUG VAN PELT

FRENCHTOWN, NJ – This fest is hidden on a horse ranch that's surrounded by trees and carpeted with lush, green grass. It's run like a machine by a huge volunteer staff and they know how to book a hard music stage.

Friday night kicked off on the Philadelphia Stage with a worship-infused set by **The Glorious Unseen**. While still fun-loving and laid-back, frontman **Ben Crist** has a way of lending a serious tone in focusing the audience's attention heavenward in praise. **Haste The Day** turned the energy way up with guitars ablaze that fill the sonic spectrum up with high-end crunch and low-end rumble. The crowd loved the heaviness and sang-along at appropriate choruses. Without missing a beat, they brought the same level of energy to **Emery**'s set that followed. It was impressive to observe that, even with a slightly more melodic sound, the crowd was steady in its positive feedback to the band. The rotating instruments by **Toby Morell** and **Devin Shelton** was not so much a novelty to witness any more as it was a slight pause between bringing another rocking number in an unrelenting set. Over on the mainstage was **Delirious?** playing one of its final shows on American soil. It felt sad to know it was probably the last time I'd see them live. **Underoath** played a dominating 60-minute set that featured a lot of guitar playing by frontman **Spencer Chamberlain**. New songs and old flew by in a rapid-fire set that invited lots of crowd participation.

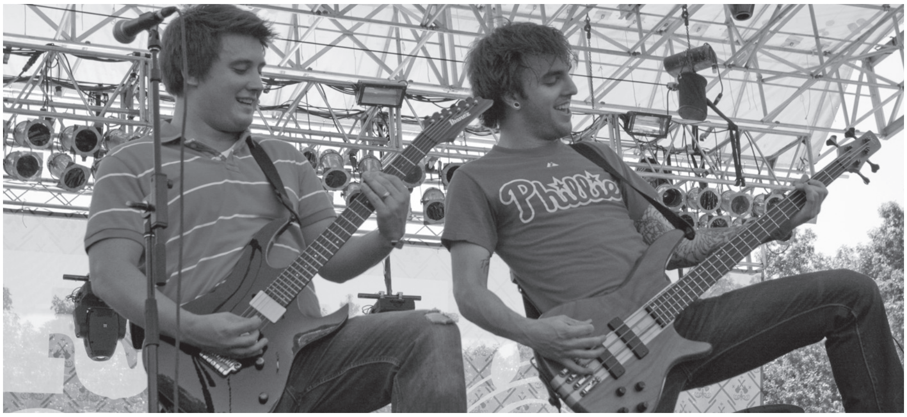
One of the cooler lines I heard from one of the festival people was when **Rich Gilcrest** was instructing the crowd on practically showing love to one another. He said, "My favorite pit move is when you're picking someone else up." A great thing about the whole weekend was that, even though the energy was intense, the attitudes were not.

While Friday evening serves as "half a day" worth of performances, Saturday is definitely a "full day." The new ministry launched by **Chad Johnson** (Come & Live) had a stage full of edgy bands, including **The Ember Days**, **I Am Alpha & Omega**, **A Plea For Purging** and two incredibly tight and well-attended sets by **Impending Doom** and **MyChildren, MyBride**. The stage is held in a tent and its boundaries were severly tested with the metal being made in it.

The Philly Stage featured some stellar metal of its own, featuring **August Burns Red**, who put on another great show that (no matter the location in the Northeast, it seems) could be called a "hometown show." It's fun to see that kind of excitement surrounding a band's set. Frontman **Jake Luhrs** shared between songs at length about a recent revival of sorts in his heart with the Lord, thanks in part to the friendship and fellowship of his buddies. It wasn't your typical onstage sermon, but just an authentic "this is what I went through and I want to encourage you" sort of off-the-cuff remark that stays true to the hardcore ethos.

Norma Jean stormed through a straight-up set that was fast and furious. **The Devil Wears Prada** had the huge crowd in its back pocket, and the band showed that constant touring keeps a musician sharp, as their edge was definitely there. While none of the bands the whole weekend come off like they're "opening" for a headliner, and they all rocked more than adequately (thanks to a great sound and video crew), it almost sounded like the volume levels slid a bit higher when they were pounding through their set.

Flyleaf closed off the Philly Stage on Saturday with a nice long set, which featured a new song that sounded great and fit right into their set. **Seabird** and **Switchfoot** both played good sets on the mainstage, but I was super thankful to hear **Relient K** play "Deathbed," complete with guest vocals by **Jon Foreman**. That was great. **The Fold** also played the mainstage (refered to as the New York Stage) earlier in the day on Saturday and their choice of a Fountains of Wayne cover tune, "Stacy's Mom," which had a few people puzzled.



Clockwise from top: ABR hamming it up; ABR's Jake making a point (photos by Jim Layton); Haste The Day; video crew editing choice action (pics by DVP); Impending Doom (Jim Layton)

ADVENT

Album: *Naked And Cold*
Label: Solid State
Release Date: September 8, 2009
Members: Joseph Musten, vocals; Johnny Smrdel, bass; Michael Rich, guitar/vocals; Christopher Ankelein, drums; Matthew Harrison, drums

myspace.com/adventnc

While Advent by definition means an arrival of a person or event, this band arrived before they even formed. That is because the majority of the members of this hardcore band were initially a part of another hardcore act, the revered underdog of a band, Beloved, until their untimely break up in 2005. But, being a part of such a well-respected band in the hardcore scene has not made the now-members of Advent feel bigheaded or entitled. In fact, all of them still work part-time jobs in their hometown in North Carolina, because their band still does not make them enough money to financially support themselves.

"I mean two of us are married, we've got mortgages and all that kind of stuff. So we don't really make enough money to do this full time so we just do it when we can and the day after we get home (from touring) we go back to work," bassist Johnny Smrdel explains."Chris, our drummer, and myself work at this grocery store Whole Foods Market. Mike the guitar player, he works part time at Whole Foods and Joe our singer, he works at a locally run music store. It's weird, but even in the Beloved days with Joe, Matt and I, even though Beloved toured, we never made enough to not have to come home and not have to go to work. So these past seven or eight years of our adult lives…it has always been a sacrifice, you know? Thankfully we all have jobs that we don't hate. I mean, I have free health insurance. You can't really complain. When it comes to our tours, we play as hard as we can because we don't get to do it that much. We're thankful for it."

Because they cherish the opportunity to play music so much, Advent waited a full three years after the break-up of Beloved to release their debut album, *Remove The Earth*, even though the band essentially formed weeks after Beloved's demise. This was also largely due to the fact that they carefully took the time to find a drummer that fit well with the band.

"When we first started it was just Joe, Matt and I and that first year and a half we did basically four shows because if we got offered a show, we had to have someone learn the drum parts, and another guitar player to learn the guitar parts," Johnny said. Often the band used Classic Case guitarist Mitch Marlow and Glass Casket/ Between The Buried and Me drummer Blake Richardson. "So that whole process of figuring out what type of band we wanted to be, getting a full band together, getting the label worked out and into it, it took forever it seemed like. So in those two years we wrote a lot of songs, threw a lot of crappy songs away, and then recorded. We finished recording that record in the end of August of 2007 and then seven months later it came out. So it was definitely a process and sometimes I'd say it was a pain in the butt, but it was all worth it."

After the release of their first album, the band went full steam ahead into their more darkly dwelling second release, *Naked and Cold*, just released this past September.

"In this album, it is a lot thrashier. The songs are a lot faster. We just tried to bulk up everything as much as we could," Johnny exclaims."The hard parts we wanted to hit harder, the fast parts we wanted to be faster and more angry, the lyrics we wanted to be even more clear on where we stand, on our faith, on politics, on hardcore as a scene in general. If you look outside or turn on the TV, every single place is getting colder and colder as each year goes on. There is war in more than half the world, there's people being killed for oil, for people, their faith. This just kind of sums up that feeling of, when you look outside, this world is naked and cold. There is nothing out there in the world that is going to stand the test of time. It is all falling and fading."

INTERVIEW: KELLY KETTERING

RETROACTIVE RECORDS
"A SALUTE TO WORLD-CLASS ROCK!"

GRAVE ROBBER

GRAVE ROBBER - INNER SANCTUM

"Wretched (vokills) and company (Lamentor, Carcass, & Plague) are back with a sophomore full length on which the band spikes their horror punk with a much more muscular and metallic edge! For fans of The Misfits, Danzig, Alice Cooper!"

ULTIMATUM
Lex Metalis

ULTIMATUM - LEX METALIS

New Mexico's thrash 'n speed metal titans are back with a new album of cover songs that pay tribute to metal heroes Quiet Riot, Overkill, Metallica, Vengeance Rising, Mortification, Motorhead, Maiden and more!!!

MAIN LINE RIDERS
WORLDSHAKER

MAIN LINE RIDERS - WORLDSHAKER

Worldshaker is earnestly beholden to hard rock godfathers (Bon-era) AC/DC. This is the best album AC/DC never made! Bold, anthemic, infectious riffs -- and everything you love about classic hard rock!

KREYSON - 20 YEARS OF KREYSON

Leaders in the resurgence of true metal! Expect a full-on, fist-in-the-air assault of power chords, polished guitar solos, and searing vocal harmonies! Majestic, melodic classic metal always prevails!!! For fans of Maiden, Judas Priest, Barren Cross!

HERO
IMMORTAL

HERO - IMMORTAL

Majestic, darkened metal from Michael Hero who runs School of Rock in Sweden! For fans of HIM, Deliverance, and 69 Eyes!

Coming soon: BRIDE - TSAR BOMBA, JACOBS DREAM - BENEATH THE SHADOWS, SAINT - HELLBLADE, LIBERTY N' JUSTICE - LIGHT IT UP

RETROACTIVE
records
www.retroactiverecords.net

Available at:

iTunes

amazon.com and you're done.

Mardel Stores
cdbaby.com/all/brutalplanet

Design: Robert Wilson - www.deathisgain.com

VENIA

Album: *Frozen Hands*
Label: Blood and Ink
Release Date: August 25, 2009
Members: Chad Urich, vocals; Ben Kocinski, guitar; Matt Bakken, drums; Matt Norris, bass; John McCully Jr., guitar

myspace.com/veniamusic

If you saw Venia play at this year's Cornerstone Festival, you had a great time moving to the tunes from their new album, *Frozen Hands*. We decided to pick their brains a little with a few questions and, as the case may be with an old East Coast tour memory, picking at some scabs, too.

You guys are gaining some momentum and getting audiences excited and stoked. How does it feel to be making progress with your band and music right now?
It has been great to see some of our hard work starting to pay off lately. We have been touring almost non-stop since the beginning of Summer 2008, and now with the new record out, things have really been picking up.

What are some of the major lessons you've learned between this point in your career and, say, the last plateau or level you were at?
We have learned a lot since we began touring off of our self-released album in 2008. When we first started touring we had no idea what to expect from the road. We had been playing big local shows back home and had grown used to having a good 200 to 300 kids at each show. We came to find out quickly that this is not the case on the road, especially for a band of our size. What we have found is touring really comes down to hard work and perseverance. We may have a few really huge shows per tour, but the majority of the shows are still us trying to gain a fan base in other areas of the country. Lots of bands get discouraged when they end up playing a VFW Hall on a Thursday night for only 15 kids, but if those 15 kids are really digging you, then the show was worth it. I guess the major lesson we have learned over the past year is that a good work ethic is key to being able to stay on the road.

When you look around at other bands, the audiences you're getting to meet, and the "scene" in general, what gets you excited? What bums you out? Why?
I love playing in a hardcore scene where everyone at the shows is there for the music and all share the passion and drive that helps keep their music scenes alive. There are a few cities that come to mind where the scenes are still thriving, where kids still hand out fliers for shows, and where a show is more of a community event than just "another show." I really get bummed out when we come to a city and find all the kids are divided amongst one another, and the shows turn into a reason to come out and beat one another down, instead of coming together and sharing their passion for music together. I have been seeing a lot more fights at shows lately, and it is getting really old.

What are some of the funniest road stories you've heard or experienced? (also any horrific ones, too)...
The funniest stories we have always come from our guitarist John. He talks in his sleep almost every night, and we love getting a good laugh at his expense. One night John was sleeping in the bunk we have in the back of our van on the first night of his first tour. We were actually driving to the studio to record the new record, and it was snowing pretty heavily outside. We hit a bump, and John's eyes just shot open and he looked forward and started screaming about how we were about to crash, and he pounded his fists together and made a crashing sound with his mouth. Then about two seconds later he was snoring again. It was so funny, but you probably had to be there. If you ever get a chance to crash with us at night though, you will most likely see something similar from John once he falls asleep.

When it comes to tour stories that are horrific, we have a bunch. The one story that always gets us upset comes from one of our first tours to the East Coast. We were doing a tour with some friends of ours back home, and we booked it out to the East Coast. We toured all the way to Maine, and then we were going to get back to Minnesota in about seven days to make it home in time for a local festival we were scheduled to play. We left from the show in Maine and drove to the next show only to find out it had been canceled, so like we do a lot of nights, we parked in a Wal-Mart parking lot, and posted up for the night. The next morning we woke up and found that the show that day had also been canceled, so we drove ourselves to the next city and posted up as we did the night before. Long story short, the next seven days all got canceled on us with only a day's notice, and we ended up driving all the way from Maine back to Minnesota, losing tons of money in the process. Long drives really aren't that big of a deal to us anymore, but what really upset us is that we couldn't just make the drive in one shot, because the shows hadn't all been canceled until the day before. So we spent seven nights in a row sleeping in Wal-Mart parking lots. It was a drag.

How would you describe the direction the band is taking with *Frozen Hands*?
Frozen Hands is a much more mature-sounding record than our previous release in my opinion. We wanted to write a faster, more aggressive record. We brought in more traditional hardcore influences, and really focused on writing what we love and would want to hear versus what kids would want us to write. We feel like if we were to write a copy of our previous record, there would be no reason for anyone to even want to listen. Progression is what makes things interesting, it's what keeps me listening to bands I love, and we will always focus on progression in the directions we feel is the best.

What albums have flipped you out and perhaps inspired you as musicians?
The Path We Tread by xLooking Forwardx is always spinning in our van. We played with those guys on our first week-long tour almost two-and-a-half years ago. The record really moves us with the speed of the album to the depth of his words. *Wake The Dead* by Comeback Kid is also one of those records that is just amazing from beginning to end, and really turned us on to hardcore. Means' record *To Keep Me From Sinking* was one of those records that we are always playing as well. As far as really current releases, *Better Ways To Die* by Death Before Dishonor has us flipping out. We were big fans of their previous material, but this new record is simply incredible. When it comes to records that inspired us to all be musicians, I think it is safe to say that the entire Blink-182 discography can be thanked for that, and I am sure that the majority of musicians coming out of our generation will agree with that! (laughs)

INTERVIEW: DOUG VAN PELT

metal will prevail!

Dagon
TERRAPHOBIC

DAGON - TERRAPHOBIC

Get ready to do battle with the minions of the deep with Dagon as your weapon of choice! Influences include Dark Tranquility, Slayer, Suffocation, Iron Maiden. *"A prodigious musical talent with skillful songwriting ability!"* - **Blabbermouth.net**

Infinite Titanic Immortal

A HILL TO DIE UPON ..... - INFINITE TITANIC IMMORTAL

Young prodigies from Illinois specializing in melodic black metal brutality! For fans of Behemoth, 1349, Dimmu Borgir, and Antestor.

BLOODLINE SEVERED
visions revealed

BLOODLINE SEVERED - VISIONS REVEALED

"...guitarists Derek Corzine & Adam Macemore possess the skills, ideas, and aptitude to rear Bloodline's collective heads up from the pack of mosh wolves....Visions Revealed presses all the right buttons!" - **Outburn Magazine.** For fans of Demon Hunter and As I Lay Dying!

Through hell...

DARK LAY STILL - THROUGH HELL

Symphonic journey of extreme epic proportions that thematically draws influences from Dante's Divine Comedy. Scandinavian-styled black metal for fans of Behemoth, Dimmu Borgir, Crimson Moonlight & Origin.

DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN
KING'S TO YOU

DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN - KING'S TO YOU

"Artful aggression to rip your head off righteously!" **HM Magazine.** For fans of Dethklok, Black Dahlia Murder, & Behemoth!

BW Bombworks RECORDS

www.bombworksrecords.com
www.myspace.com/bombworksrecords

Available at:

iTunes

amazon.com and you're done.

cdbaby.com/all/bombworksrecords

Design: Robert Wilson - www.deathisgain.com

OH, SLEEPER

Album: *Son of the Morning*
Label: Solid State
Release Date: August 25, 2009
Members: Micah Kinard, vocals; Shane Blay, guitar/vocals; James Erwin, guitar; Lucas Starr, bass; Matt Davis, drums.

myspace.com/ohsleeper

After introducing Oh, Sleeper at this year's Cornerstone Festival, I stepped back in awe. They simply had that "choi," that hard-to-define-but-you-recognize-it-when-it's-there thing. Dang it! They were just heavy – *Ozzfest* heavy.

What are some practical ways that you guys (as a band) have become more tight and dialed into the "metal" tones/sound?
Micah Kinard: Hmm... the way that we approach writing may be a little different. We wrote our first album in a more experimental way than our second. Over the course of our first album cycle we observed crowd responses and listened to what our fans said were their favorite parts of our songs and tried to write a new album of all "favorite" parts. So, to sum up my answer, we just listen to our fans. They are who've brought us this far so they are who we care about.

How do y'all feel about the new album?
We are very happy with the new album and *very* excited to see what our friends and fans think of it. It's very refreshing to be playing new material again.

How do you feel about your chances to move forward as a band (selling more records, playing bigger shows, getting more fans, etc)? What are signs that you have "momentum" at the moment?
Really, the only thing you can do in this industry is keep your eyes forward and focused. There is always going to be overnight success bands and trendy-hype bands that make you feel like you are standing still, but there are many, many more hardworking bands out there that prove that perseverance and dedication pay off. We are happy with where we are. Our sales are climbing and our shows are growing. What more do you need!?

What other music, bands, or artists, albums, songs have inspired you all as artists – particularly in the last year, year and a half?
I can't really speak for everyone, but I know that Thrice is a huge inspiration for all of us. They continue to grow and mature and explore as a band, year after year, album after album. They are true musicians.

Read any good books lately? If so, tell me about it, how it's inspired you or made you feel challenged, angry or other emotion(s)?
I recently read a book called *The Furious Longing of God* by Brennan Manning. It's really given me a new look at grace and the romantic unfairness of God's love for me.

What are your plans for the next three months? Six months? Year? How excited are you feeling about these plans? What kind of apprehension, if any?
Tour, tour, tour! We received emails from all over the world of people wanting to come to shows and talk about lyrics and we want to meet all of them! We are very excited and definitely in it for the long haul.

What are your thoughts behind the abbreviated/partial/broken pentagram on the *Son of the Morning* album cover? (I'm also curious if you'd have interesting reactions from other bands on tour, fans, etc.)
I absolutely love the symbol. It's a blunt and iconic representation of God's triumph over evil. Yes (he laughs), we have heard all sorts of flak and curiosities about the symbol, but that's exactly what we want. We want to get people talking and asking questions.

INTERVIEW: DOUG VAN PELT

BLACK OUT
CITY LIGHT DREAMS

CITY LIGHT DREAMS

"BLACKOUT" NOW AVAILABLE
ON **ITUNES, SMARTPUNK** & **BIGCARTEL**

VISIT US ONLINE AT MYSPACE.COM/CITYLIGHTDREAMS
CITYSOUNDMEDIA.COM · THISISALCHEMY.COM

WATCHTOARTISTS

Before We Forget

Add another Southern Rock log to the metalcore fire – and watch its flames burn brightly! Well, if the band were forced to describe their songs at a recent show using just emotions and colors, they'd say: "Ridiculous and red, considering we're always all over the place and making jokes with the crowd and generally having a good time."

The band's new EP (*ltd.*) is "far more aggressive and abrasive" than their first album, "which was a lot of contrast between calm and heavy."

Though the band has a serious spoken message midway through the new album, don't be misled. They're a load of fun: "We could go on for days about all of our ridiculous habits, and situations we've found ourselves in. From our love of peeing outdoors as opposed to using the indoor restrooms to blasting Pantera after a show and screaming as loud as we can in the van. As well as some great memories of flaming toilet paper soccer and all the outrageous things that happen when we manage to have a bonfire."

Abel

are Kevin Kneifel on vocals/guitar; Alex David on bass; and John Rell III on drums.

"Alex and myself were in a band called The Comeback Tour for a few years," explains Kevin. "Alex on drums, and myself on guitar and vocals. We toured quite a bit, and got the chance to play lots of great shows with lots of great bands all over the country. That band broke up in October of last year. We all really felt like it was time to call it quits, and that God was leading us in other directions. Even though I felt led by God to do music as a ministry, I sort of came to terms with the idea of not touring or doing it full time anymore, which was hard, but I tried my best to trust that God was in control. A few weeks later, I gave John a call about just playing some worship music and writing songs as an every-once-in-a-while thing. I knew John from shows, and heard he was a pretty good drummer. When Alex caught wind of the idea, he volunteered to play bass guitar, just to fill things out and get a chance to write some new music. We chose the name ABEL because we felt like it reflected what we were trying to do. In the Bible, Abel brought pleasing offerings to God. That was our intention with this band.

"We kept things pretty quiet about ABEL until we started recording in the spring. Just a handful of shows with close friends – and then a Myspace up in time to get ready for Cornerstone and summer touring. Jason from Facedown Records heard about our music through our good friend, and current manager, Josh Niemiera. Josh kind of reached out on our behalf without discussing it with us first, actually. It goes to show that we can hardly predict what God has planned for our lives, because there I was thinking I was done with full-time music, and a few months later, we're given the opportunity to sign with an amazing label."

Hundredth

Hundredth is: Chadwick Johnson – vocals; Michael Raymo – bass; Matt Koontz – drums; and Alex Blackwell – guitar. They're managed by Andy of A Plea For Purging. Chad describes a finished Hundredth song as: "I'd like to think most of our songs are bred solely by passion. If there isn't any anguish somewhere in the song, its not a Hundredth song to me."

This and they carry a zombie handbook in the van at all times. "...in case the inevitable outbreak of the walking dead happens soon."

The band's debut album, When Will We Surrender will be out on Mediaskare Records in early 2010.

Photo: Holly Jo

Photo: Chris Fulcher

Texas In July

Meet the newest metal-core band out of PA. So, what's with the name from that other state? "There's not much meaning to the name," explains Alex the frontman. "We were talking about recent trips we'd taken. Christian had gone to 'Texas in July,' and there it was." Logan the guitarist adds: "There's nothing hotter than Texas in July!" (both laugh)

Alex elaborates on the PA connection: "The music community around our home area of Lancaster County has truly helped us with our growth as a band. They've been patient with us throughout our growth, and been supportive as we continue to expand musically. Lancaster County has had an amazing, well-informed, enthusiastic music scene for some time, and we've been able to catch their attention, and, hopefully, to maintain it! The local shows have been awesome!"

"The ABR guys' hometown is roughly 15 minutes from ours," adds Logan, "both being in Lancaster County. Our relationship with them is one we appreciate. They are all nice dudes and we enjoy spending time with them when they are off tour. They have also done a lot to help us out through their website, and social networking sites. They've kinda taken us under their wing, and we've really enjoyed our friendship with them."

They signed to the label that also gave ABR its first shot – CI Records. "Jeremy (Weiss, the label head) first became interested in us after he saw us play our live show at hometown venue, the Chameleon Club, located in Lancaster. We caught his attention with our stage vibe and he decided that he wanted to help produce and put out our next record. We decided to trust him and it has brought us nothing but satisfaction."

The band still has high schoolers in it, so their long-range plans really start to break open at the start of next summer. "After that we plan to hit the road: first stop Europe, second Canada, and lastly a full U.S. tour of the 48 contiguous!"

Get a load of this band's music ... quick!

—Doug Van Pelt

Photo: Scott Smallin

O'Brother

Fantastic, thinking-man's music that's not afraid to rock (think Thrice).

"We've been doing a lot of tours with our friends in Dignan, All Get Out, Rova Zetella and Winston Audio," explains multi-instrumentalist Tanner Merritt, "and it's always fun touring with your friends. The couple of weeks we just did with Dignan were really amazing, both in turnout and just having a good time with our friends and meeting new people. Our tour with John Nolan was our first tour that we did with someone that we didn't already know, but we got along with him and his wife, Camille, great. They were some of the nicest people we've met in a long time. It's also always cool crossing paths with other bands that are on tour while we're on tour. SXSW, in Austin, TX, was a really cool experience for us. We played the Favorite Gentlemen showcase, and at one point in the backstage area, we knew everyone that was back there. Either from back home or from other bands we've toured with.

"O'Brother is a pretty fresh idea for all of us. We've only written a handful of songs together, which we released as *The Death of Day* in May of this year, so it's difficult to describe our music. From what we've done thus far, it's been pretty ambient, led by overdriven guitars with soft and ballsy vocals. With having three guitarists in the band, we thought each person had to play a certain part or duty to fulfill. I think when we start working on new material, we'll be able to step back and just write what sounds good instead of having a main, heavy, and an ambient guitar part. Lyrically, most of that is up to Tanner. In general, his lyrics seems to be dark yet hopeful, and we all love it.

"If I had to name one oddity per member, I would probably let you know that Aaron snacks a lot, Anton has jokes, Michael has been getting into Star Wars, Johnny can scream like a girl, and Tanner, well, you don't need to know about that."

[see more of each band's interview at hmmag.com]

THE ALMOST HAS ~~ALMOST~~ DEFINITELY MADE IT.

One would think Aaron Gillespie releases all of his inner demons through the intensely pulsating drumbeats he plays for the popular metalcore outfit Underoath, but apparently that is not the case. After all, his latest project with his indie-rock band, The Almost, is prepping for a November third release of their new album, which happens to be titled *Monster Monster*. So where do these monsters in Aaron's life come from that inspired this record and its title track?

"Every day I go about my life with all this stuff in my life that I don't enjoy," Gillespie explained. "Although there are monsters that I feel like keep me away from grace and keep me away from productivity and positivity, the record is about finding hope, finding that you can get up and go along with your day and squash the monster in your life. You have to focus on the things that are true in your life. You have a choice every day when you wake up to go, I believe how bad I am and I believe in all that negativity in my life and I believe in how bleak it looks. Or you have the choice to wake up and go, 'I believe that this is true, that this is real and that this is good.'"

This positive message is reinforced in Gillespie's boyishly charming voice in each of the new album's songs, especially in the lightly upbeat ones such as "Summer Summer" and "Young Again." In a slight contrast, "Monster Monster" as a single offers a bit more of a rock edge with driving guitar lines as Gillespie chants, "We've got to get out, get out. Before it gets you, gets you." But this mix of dark imagery and light sound is no longer just a product of Gillespie. For while The Almost's 2007 debut album, *Southern Weather*, was almost entirely a product of Gillespie in terms of songwriting as well as instruments played, this second album has a lot more contribution by the rest of the band, which is guaranteed to bring the group full circle and truly establish The Almost as an entity, not just Aaron Gillespie's side project from Underoath.

"They wrote a lot of the songs, they played most of the guitar, it's a band effort," Gillespie said. ”That is something that I can't say about the last record. I definitely wanted it to sound more like a band, to be songs we wrote, more like a rock band this time around."

And while it seems obvious that Gillespie is musically excelling both in rock and metal, he also has another musical passion that few people know about.

"I'm really into country music that I think people would be surprised to know," Gillespie told me. "Someday when I'm older I would like to play in a country band, but I'm not sure that I'm good enough. Those guys in Nashville play really well!"

That seems to be a bit of a modest statement for Gillespie, who is not only able to sing but can play guitar, drums and keyboards. And beyond that, he is able to do them in different time signatures. For example, to be able to play drums and sing at the same time, Gillespie must play drums in 4/4 time and sing in ¾ time, which can be quite difficult for a musician to master. But regardless of the various instruments he can play at once, there is still a clear divide between the dynamic of Underoath and the dynamic of The Almost.

"Well, I play drums in one and I sing in the other. It is different music, [The Almost] is more acceptable, it is less of a physical thing, which is nice. Underoath touring is very physical, kind of acrobatic thing every day. But with The Almost, I just sing in a band. It's not that big of a deal, you know?"

I think fans of The Almost and this musically lighter side of Aaron would disagree. It's a big deal, no question.

✖

by kelly kettering

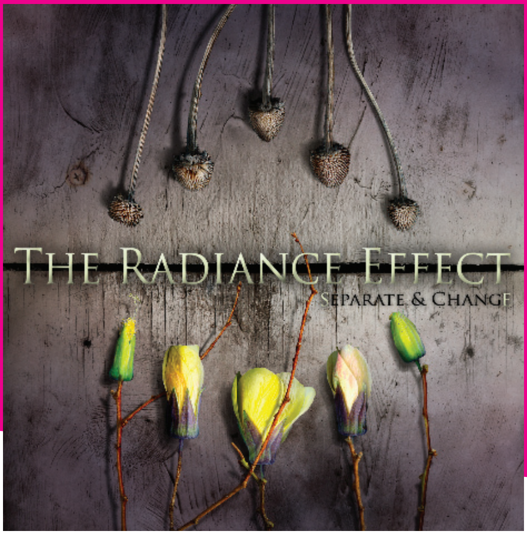
Photo: Robert Chamorro

ADVERTISEMENT

Luther-N

Album: *Dogmatics* | **Label**: Youngside Records | **Release Date**: 2009 | **Home**: Honolulu, Hawaii
Members: Shane Sowers – Vox, Bass, Programming | Jeanine Sowers – Programming | Danny Han – Guitar
RIYL: "Mix Def Leppard with a little Depeche Mode and Human League and Korn, add John Sykes and the theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin."
In the Beginning: "After my time with Junker Jorg, I thought I would not play in a band anymore, but the passion and desire to record a different sound and to write lyrics pertinent to the reformation of our culture kept burning. I enlisted Jeanine and called, who in my opinion, was the best metal guitarist in Hawaii and asked if he would like to record a CD with us and the rest is history."
Without these Bands, We Wouldn't Exist as a Band: "Metallica, John Sykes, Depeche Mode."
Album I'd give@Christmas: "Extol – *The Blueprint Dives.* All I can say is … 'Oh My God.'"
One Conviction: "Justification by Faith Alone."
If it wasn't for music, we'd be doing: "Danny – Computers/Programming; Jeanine – Computers/Programming; Shane – Computers/Programming."
Little-known secret: "We write our own songs."
(Answers by Shane Sowers)

ROCK AND ROLL



The Radiance Effect

Album: *Separate & Change* | **Release Date**: August 22, 2009 | **Home**: Missouri
Members: Corey Martin – Vocals, Guitar, Keys | Ben Norrell – Drums | Kurtis Achterman – Bass | Chris Caserez – Lead Guitar | **RIYL**: Switchfoot, Dashboard Confessional, Thrice
If we had the chance to play for most of the televised world and play just one song, it'd be: "That would probably have to be 'Make It Happen.' It's a song that we wrote for an organization called Compassion International, and we think it pretty much encompasses everything we stand for as a band: showing love to everyone we come in contact with, in whatever way God chooses. That, and Corey would be really freaked out about playing piano on national television."
One question I'd like to be asked: "'What was your favorite game to play as a kid?' The one where you were on the jungle gym or playground equipment and you couldn't touch the ground, because it was all HOT lava!"
Without these Bands, We Wouldn't Exist as a Band: "Switchfoot / MUTEMATH / Guns 'N Roses."
If it wasn't for music, we'd be doing: "Corey does too much as it is. He would probably be a professional photographer or a producer. Ben would most definitely use his skills as a gamer to make a living playing video games. Kurtis would be a music teacher. Since he has voiced that he has no other skills(?). And Chris would probably be a translator for something. He's always talking in languages none of us can understand at all."

Tracy Towns

Album: *Above* | **Release Date**: September, 2009 | **Home**: Peoria, IL
Members: Tracy Towns – Guitar, Bass, Vocals, Lyrics | Rita Towns – Lyrics | **RIYL**: Megadeth
Discography: *Devastation, Townstra* and *Tracita Towne.*
Little-known secret: "I didn't start to learn to play an instrument (bass at first) until I was 25."
If it wasn't for music, I'd be doing: "I would probably do woodworking if I didn't have music as a creative outlet."
Without these Bands...: "Bride, Stryper and Saint all released stuff in the '80s that really motivated me to want to start creating original music."
One Question for God: "What can I do to have the most positive influence on those around me?"
YouTube recommendations: "That's a tough one. I make a lot of music videos for my YouTube channel, so I'm on there quite a bit. There's a channel called 'PDXguitarfreak' where a guitarist does some really entertaining stuff."
Album I'd give@Christmas: "I would have to say the album Disciple – *By God*, because it has such cool and diverse music (and some great lyrics) on it, and it is really well played."
One conviction: "I think that it is the belief that no matter what life throws at you, if you turn to God and always trust Him first, things will work out eventually. They may not always turn out the way you planned or expected, but they do turn out the way they are supposed to, usually giving you an opportunity to grow."

ADVERTISEMENT

Await The Day

Album: *Time For Change* | **Home**: Houston, TX area (Baytown, Spring)
Members: Ben Fontenot – Lead Vocals, Guitars | Eddie Boyer – Vocals, Bass | Trey Timmerman – Drums | Cody Stokes – Vocals, Guitars | **RIYL**: Thrice, Foo Fighters, Incubus, Emery, Anberlin
If not for music...: Ben – Professional Beard Model | Eddie – Mountain Climber | Trey – Artist | Cody – Insurance Salesman
One Conviction: "We have been seriously chasing after the Holy Spirit this summer. Everywhere we turn God has been teaching us about His Spirit. From the Book of Acts that our small group has been studying, to Mark Batterson's *Wild Goose Chase* to Francis Chan's new book, *Forgotten God*; we can't seem to get away from the Spirit ... not that we're complaining. I think if we all learned to listen to and live by the power of the Spirit then 'Christians' wouldn't have such a bad name in the world. Somewhere along the lines we (Christianity) started trying to live life in the name of Christ instead of with *in* Christ. There is a big difference between the two. Anyone can call themselves a Christian ... few actually follow Jesus."
Without these Albums...: "Forever Changed – *Need to Feel Alive* | Further Seems Forever – *Hide Nothing* | Emery – *The Weak's End*."
Albums I'd give@Christmas: "House of Heroes – *The End is Not the End*. I keep coming back to the creativity & clever lyrics. We got to share a stage with them this summer ... awesome guys and they sound great live."

TOWN HALL

Everdown

Album: (untitled) | **Label**: Urban Achiever | **Release Date**: Spring 2010
Members: Erik – Vocals | Chris – Drums | Becht – Bass | John – Guitar, Vocals | Greene – Guitar, Vocals
RIYL: "That is easy. We have no problems with that kind of question. Everyone sounds like another band, unless you were rockin' the '60s and '70s. Everything now is just another takeoff from something else. But we would be compared to – Handsome, Helmet, Prong and, at times, Only Living Witness and we have been told many times Erik (the singer) sounds like John Bush (Armored Saint and Anthrax), which is fine with us."
Discography: Two EPs and a 7" as Crawlspace (then changed name to Everdown) | *Shelter* (indie) | *Sicken* (Tooth & Nail) | *Straining* (Tooth & Nail) **Home**: Manchester, New Hampshire
Little-known secret: "Well, right before our tour for *Straining* I broke my eardrum with a Q-Tip ... because I was trying to break dance while I was cleaning my ears. Pretty funny! And then at Cornerstone supporting *Sicken* our singer was really sick ... and needed to go!! And was trying to hold it. He dove offstage during a sick breakdown to surf and, well ... it all came out. We still had 20 minutes to play..."
Albums I'd give@Christmas: "Phil Wickham's sing-along worship album. Amazing, uplifting CD; and then I would have to follow it up with ... Embodyment's *Narrow Scope of Things*. I love them."
One Question for God: "Too many questions to ask. I would like to just hug him and say thanks."

City Light Dreams

Album: *Black Out* | **Release Date**: November 3, 2009 | **Home**: Chesapeake, VA
RIYL: "Paramore (we have a chick singer, so you kinda have to do that), Anberlin, and Circa Survive is what we've been told a lot."
Members: Aaron Littman – Bass | Lindsay Oglesby – Vocals | Christian Zawaki – Drums, Vocals | Jake Degraff – Guitar | Justin Carter – Guitar
If there wasn't music, what skills would your members use and what would they do? "Aaron would probably own the world as he is very active in the business world, stock market and real estate. Justin would be a professional Disney star. Jake would be a stunt man. Christian would still be in HS and Lindsay would be the next Project Runway model or a teacher as she is very involved in fashion and loves kids."
Album I'd give@Christmas: "Well for me right now I would have to say Anberlin – *Cities*. It's a great album and has helped m through a lot of stuff currently in my life."
If a super surgeon removed all of your emotions and the ability to feel any emotion for the rest of your life, which one or ones would you most want to have back? Why? "Love, because without love we are nothing."
Little-known secret: "When we go on tour Justin and Jake bring a ton of avocados and we jam to the Jonas Brothers in the 3D concert. I know: lame, right? But we're just kids having fun."

See full interviews with all artists at hmmag.com

"WE'RE NOT DEAD," BEGINS THE OPENING TRACK ON *WITNESS*, A SIMPLE REMINDER AIMED AT FANS AND CRITICS THAT CARRIES DUAL MEANING. TWO YEARS OF SETBACKS AND CONTROVERSIES HAVE GIVEN BLESSTHEFALL REASON TO PROVE THEY'RE ALIVE ALL OVER AGAIN.

After their 2007 debut, *His Last Walk*, original vocalist Craig Mabbitt left the band in December 2007 while on tour in Europe. When the remaining members decided to move on without him, they nearly gave up the search for a permanent replacement before finding Beau Bokan.

"We knew it wasn't our time to go," guitarist Eric Lambert says. "We still were writing songs that we were so stoked on we were like, 'We just need a good singer on top of this and it'll be awesome.'

"We tried a lot of guys out and there was definitely some good singers out there but I think they just didn't mesh with us as people and there were people that meshed well with us that weren't great singers. And when Beau came in, it was seriously the week before I was going to college. I signed up for college because I was giving up. I was like 'We're not gonna find anyone. We've been looking the last six months and nothing's come to us.' And then seriously, Beau fell out of the sky and (we were) like 'Well yeah let's try him out.' He came in, he seriously meshed with everyone. Beau could get along with anyone. He's just so fun and right away we felt like we knew him forever. And then he came in and sang some songs for us and he sounded great. He sang all the old songs perfect and he sang 'To Hell and Back' for the first time and we were like 'Dude, this is awesome, let's just do it.' I dropped the classes."

With Bokan on board, the Phoenix five-piece began assembling new material into their second full-length. Bokan wrote his singing parts, bassist Jared Warth wrote his screamed vocals and Lambert, rhythm guitarist Mike Frisby and drummer Matt Traynor rounded out the instrumentals. The band knew it had questions to answer with *Witness*.

"A lot of people doubted us, and when you lose a singer, that's like shooting yourself in the foot," Lambert says. "We were never about one guy in the band, we were always about all five of us. Everyone did their part. Songs talk about just still being here, still doing what we do best. Kids are either gonna like us or they're gonna hate us because Craig's not in the band anymore. I think that was our biggest motivation this entire process, from the lyrics, writing songs, just trying to write better parts just because we had to. We had to put out the best record we could."

But even with a new singer, questions about the band's faith have persisted, fueled in part by Mabbitt's decision to join Escape The Fate, a band known for its hard-partying antics and run-ins with the law.

"Some people think like we're such a Christian band – which we are, I mean we're all Christians, we're all good kids," Lambert says. "It's kind of hard to say we weren't Christians because of Craig, because even if it's not the best a lot, I think – I'm gonna be real, the first song on (*His Last Walk* is) about him having a child – that's premarital sex and that's not exactly a Christian thing, but the last song on the record is about Jesus Christ dying to relinquish our sins. I'm not gonna say it's hypocritical or anything, but a lot of kids ask us (if) we are still Christians and it's kind of like, 'Well, of course, we're still Christians. It's not like Craig was the only reason we were doing this as a band.'"

On *Witness*, the band let their faith speak for itself. "It's definitely still inspiring lyrics," Lambert says. "Something kids can look to and relate to, whether you want to see it as faith or just your own beliefs. We have like faith- and grace-related lyrics but I don't think it'll go as far as like preaching or anything like that really. There's definitely still Christian influence on the record though."

The first single, "God Wears Gucci," has raised some eyebrows due to its resemblance to a certain Dayton band's name and a line from one of their songs, but Lambert insists there's no blessthefall / The Devil Wears Prada brawl in the making and they were just having a little fun with the title.

"That song's talking about how religion's become like a fashion almost," he explains. "Being a Christian myself, I hate seeing kids wear like rosaries or anything for fashion. They don't really believe in what it stands for so it's really making a mockery of what I believe in. It's kind of about how people are fake when it comes to religion. They'll say things just to act cool or something but they won't really follow through on it. It's kind of about how it's become more of a materialistic thing than an actual belief."

Despite the hardships and controversies, the long gap between

BY COREY ERB

records allowed the band members to grow as instrumentalists and find a sound that suits them.

"Over the last couple years, everyone's had a different influence," Lambert says. "Mine's more metal, Mike is pop, Jared likes jazz-based and metal occasionally. Everyone sort of acquired their own style of playing and grew through the years and we all kind of brought what we had to the table with our new sounds."

Bokan brought his own assets to the band's sound from his former band, Take the Crown. "He came from a pop band kind of but it's good that he has a really catchy hook in all of his singing parts," Lambert says. "He really brings out that element that we need – that kind of hookier part. We're not just a screaming band, we're a singing/screaming band, which there's a fine line between bands that can pull that off. You're either Hawthorne Heights or you're Underoath. You're either good at what you do or (laughs) not very good."

Blessthefall's hoping after a rocky couple years that they've landed on the right side of that line with a new record that Lambert says elaborates on what they did on their first record, calling it *His Last Walk* "on steroids."

"The breakdowns get a lot heavier and the choruses and the singing parts are a lot catchier," he says. "We were able to actually sit down and pick through the songs and make them what we wanted to be, instead of throwing a verse, a chorus, a bridge here real fast. We're really energetic live and we like playing energetic music so we try writing songs that are kind of like head-bobby, that have almost like a rap background, like we all get in a groove for a song. It's definitely a lot more progressed. I know a lot of bands say that but our first record was when I was 16, and now I'm 20, so we got to put a lot of time into this record and we're really, really proud of it."

AVAILABLE NOW
ON VINYL

ZAO WHERE BLOOD AND FIRE BRING REST

ZAO
Where Blood And Fire
Bring Rest

BELOVED (US)
FAILURE ON

BELOVED
Failure On

furtherseemsforever
how to start a fire

FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER
How To Start A Fire

BROKEN CIRCLES

WWW.BROKENCIRCLES.COM

ROXX PRODUCTIONS

PROUDLY PRESENTS

60 MINUTES of STRICTLY STRYPER

VISIT WWW.STRICTLYSTRYPER.COM FOR LISTINGS

"Also available from Roxx Productions: Michael Phillips debut CD 'Mirrors within Mirrors' and Ultimatum's 'Puppet of Destruction' Remastered and Expanded! Also watch for 'Temporary Insanity a Salute to Deliverance' coming in 2010! Visit www.roxxproductions.com for details."

AVAILABLE NOW FROM CI RECORDS

TEXAS IN JULY
I AM

TEXAS IN JULY *"I Am"* CD
The debut full-length from metal phenoms TEXAS IN JULY. Find out what all the buzz is about!

AN EARLY ENDING
BLOODLINES

AN EARLY ENDING *"Bloodlines"*
The debut full length from AN EARLY ENDING carves out a place in the area where metallic hardcore meets infections melody.

AUGUST BURNS RED
O COME
O COME
EMMANUEL

AUGUST BURNS RED
"O Come O Come Emmanuel" 7"
This ABR Christmas single is limited to 1000 copieson colored vinyl!

GWEN STACY
"A Dialogue" 7"
Featuring 2 songs from their SolidState debut + an exclusive track. 1000 copies on colored vinyl!

TEXAS IN JULY
SALT OF THE EARTH

TEXAS IN JULY
"Salt of the Earth"
Available only as a digital download card, TEXAS IN JULY's debut EP is an instant classic!

AUGUST BURNS RED

AUGUST BURNS RED
***"Looks Fragile After All"* CD+DVD**
ABR's first EP packaged with a bonus DVD featuring interviews, video and more!

GET THESE AND OTHER RELEASES NOW AT:
www.cirecords.com/catalog

Photo: Andy Barron

PARAMORE

Photo: Ray Lego

SWITCHFOOT

AUSTRIAN DEATH MACHINE

YOU CAN LAUGH IF YOU WANT TO

BY KELLY KETTERING

WHEN IT COMES TO METAL, THERE ARE MANY STEREOTYPES THAT MUSICIANS OF THE GENRE TEND TO AVOID IN ORDER TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THESE STEREOTYPES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, OVERLY REPETITIVE RIFFS OR BREAKDOWNS, THE STANDARD LYRIC DISCUSSING SOME TYPICAL SCENARIO OF PAIN OR VIOLENCE, AND JUST GENERAL MACHO-NESS. AND SO IT COMES AS LITTLE SURPRISE THAT AN ARTIST WOULD SOON EXPLOIT ALL SUCH LABELS AND MAKE ONE RIDICULOUSLY BR00TAL ALBUM. THROUGH THE INSPIRATION OF THE GREAT ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER (OR AHHNOLD AS HE IS OFTEN JOKINGLY REFERRED TO) TIM LAMBESIS OF AS I LAY DYING TAKES THIS PIGEONHOLING TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL WITH HIS SIDE PROJECT, AUSTRIAN DEATH MACHINE.

"Originally I was just going to call the band Arnold, because I thought with an obvious project the more obvious the name the better. But then I thought maybe that was a bit too plain, a little too obvious," Tim explained, as he then came upon the name Austrian Death Machine.

And so, through separate tracking, Tim plays every instrument on the project's two albums, this September's release, *Double Brutal* and the debut album, 2008's *Total Brutal*.

"The idea just came from casually talking and goofing around with my friends," Tim explained, as he described why Ahhnold is the perfect inspiration for a project like this. "Whenever the topic of Arnold movies comes up, especially those one liners, everybody has their fun trying to impersonate him and I thought it would be really fun to take all these phrases that everybody already knows and make songs about them. Especially, every lyric that has the perfect catch phrase for each chorus whether you are serious or not. Those phrases already exist. Arnold is the most over the top out of everybody, especially when it comes to the one-liners. He's so much more accomplished as far as being an icon. He's the guy that is the embodiment of metal."

But even with the embodiment of metal as an inspiration, Tim still had a little background research to do when writing these albums, which included re-watching some classic Schwarzenegger films, as well as deciding which riffs that he writes embody Ahhnold well.

"I sit down and I think, 'Okay, I kind of want to write a guitar riff that … well, there are certain guitar riffs that just feel like Austrian Death Machine," Tim described. "They have that really brutal, fast driving kind of sound to them. Whenever I'm in that kind of mood I just sit down to write it. And once I have one idea it usually turns into another and within an hour I usually have a full song. Once that song is done it is just finding the one liner that fits the idea. But for me, because I am one of the contributors writing guitar parts for As I Lay Dying, depending on what mood I'm in really depends on what I write. Sometimes with As I Lay Dying I always think what we write is a bit more layered and textured and has more feeling to it and with Austrian Death Machine I just want it to be aggressive and purposely stereotypical metal, which sometimes is more fun in its own way, but each thing has its own place."

But if listeners think listening to Austrian Death Machine is boisterously stereotypical and over the top, witnessing an Austrian Death Machine live show is even that much more ridiculous, as Tim and his cohorts dress up as various Ahhnold characters and partake in other various forms of debauchery on stage.

"We get the chance to joke around between songs and just do the things that most metal bands can't get away with," Tim boasts. "Part of it is poking fun at ourselves and part of it is getting the crowd involved. For instance, for the last couple shows we thought it would be fun if we all wore outfits resembling one of the Arnold movies so we upped the ante by coming up with each stage persona. John got a cop outfit like Team 1000 from *Terminator* and the guitar player looked like one of the guys from *Commando* with his army getup on and it just kind of depends from show to show, we just kind of change depending on what we're feeling like. It's definitely not choreographed, it's more instinctual. I think we're going to fly out to the East Coast and do some dates. The tough thing is I can't do a full tour, because of my schedule with As I Lay Dying so I just try to do shows here and there."

As Tim becomes more serious with his Austrian Death Machine material on the second album ("When I wrote *Total Brutal* I went into it pretty casually, because it was just this whim, this idea. With this record I probably took a little bit more of a perfectionist mentality from the first album. So naturally I would say that it was better because there was more time put into it.") he has made some more time aside from As I Lay Dying to go on an upcoming Austrian Death Machine tour as well as work in some cover songs to make *Double Brutal* a double disc album.

"We'd never done any cover songs with As I Lay Dying before. I thought that, one of the reasons for that is that I always picture cover songs being done by certain types of bands and AILD didn't seem like that band that would do a cover song. So I wanted to do some and I thought this would be a perfect opportunity considering how many cover songs are related to Arnold's movies. A friend of mine, he's a big Arnold fan, he called me up and he had this idea that he heard 'Hell Bent For Leather' and realized it would be the perfect combination so that was the first suggestion, thinking it would go perfectly with in *Terminator II* when he says, 'I need your clothes, your boots and your motorcycle.' I loved the idea and thought it was hilarious and I casually put something up on the Austrian Death Machine website about it and it was one of the most responded to posts that I have ever made. I got all of these suggestions and I had to narrow them down to ten."

Some of the songs that made this top ten list include "Gotta Go" by Agnostic Front and "I Turned Into A Martian" by the Misfits, all of which had incorporated Ahhnold quotes and themes. For example, "Allow Me To Break The Ice" is integrated with subject matter and quotes specifically from *Batman & Robin*, where Ahhnold took on the character of Mr. Freeze.

Despite the number of Schwarzenegger-themed songs Tim has manifested thus far, he has yet to use some of Ahhnold's most popular lines – such as "Hasta La Vista, Baby" – which means that even though it may appear as a short-sighted gimmick, this project has no foreseeable end in sight. "There are so many over-the-top action movie moments with Arnold, including the most famous one liners, like 'I'll Be Back' that I have yet to write songs for. I have ideas for that song, but that is something that I still need to tap into."

But arguably the hardest part of Ahhnold that Tim must tap into is his accent, which he frequently imitates throughout the Austrian Death Machine albums. Any chance the Governator will be doing the voices himself on the next album?

"I actually knew someone whose cousin worked at the governor's office up in Sacramento as some kind of secretary or assistant or something like that and said that Arnold had heard the album," Tim said. "The assistant said Arnold thought the album was funny, but he couldn't understand the words. I assume he probably isn't totally up on this style of metal, but that's just a lot of hearsay; I don't know anything officially."

✖

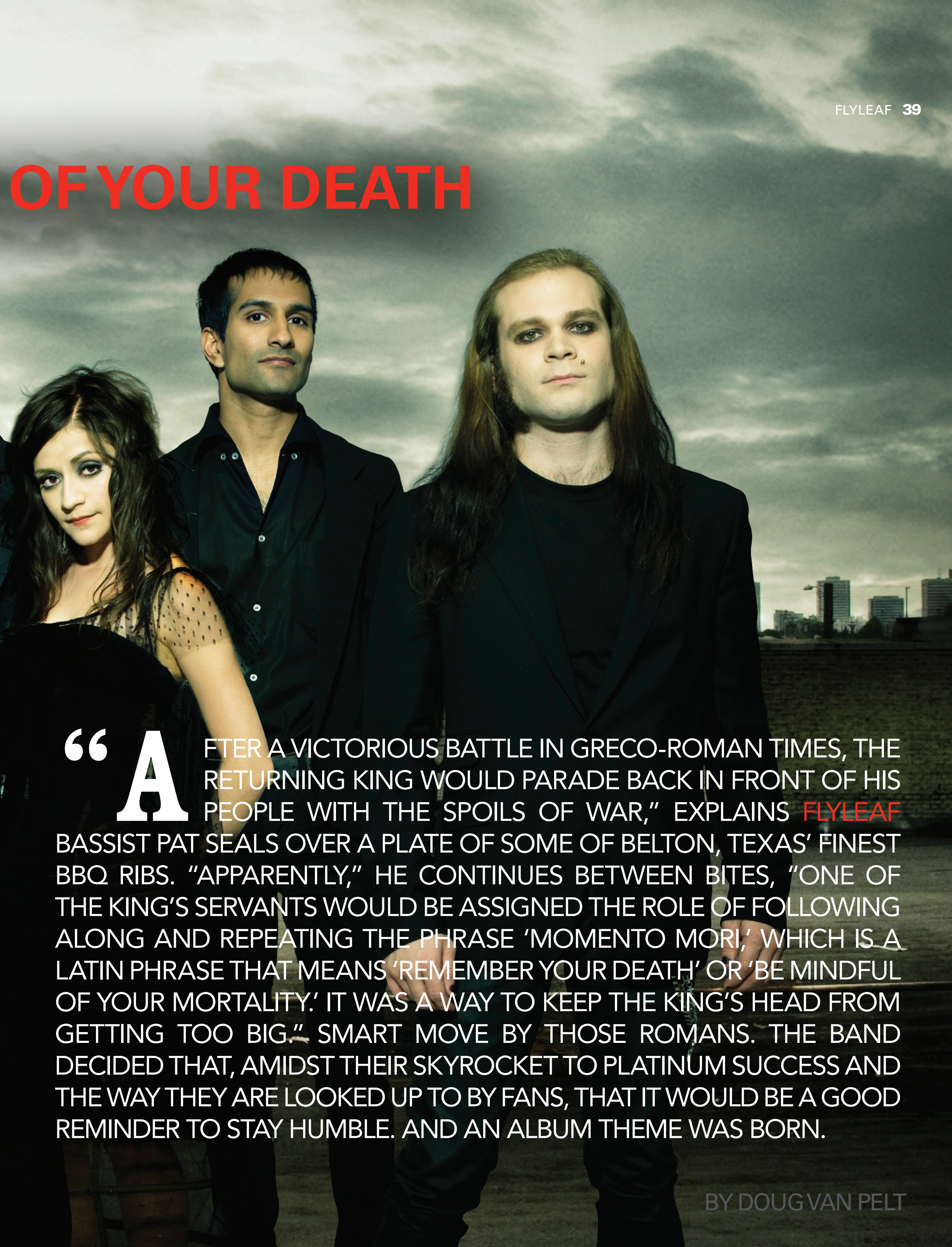
Photo: Todd Myra

Flyleaf

REMEMBER THE DAY

Photo: Mark Holthusen

OF YOUR DEATH



“AFTER A VICTORIOUS BATTLE IN GRECO-ROMAN TIMES, THE RETURNING KING WOULD PARADE BACK IN FRONT OF HIS PEOPLE WITH THE SPOILS OF WAR,” EXPLAINS FLYLEAF BASSIST PAT SEALS OVER A PLATE OF SOME OF BELTON, TEXAS’ FINEST BBQ RIBS. “APPARENTLY,” HE CONTINUES BETWEEN BITES, “ONE OF THE KING’S SERVANTS WOULD BE ASSIGNED THE ROLE OF FOLLOWING ALONG AND REPEATING THE PHRASE ‘MOMENTO MORI,’ WHICH IS A LATIN PHRASE THAT MEANS ‘REMEMBER YOUR DEATH’ OR ‘BE MINDFUL OF YOUR MORTALITY.’ IT WAS A WAY TO KEEP THE KING’S HEAD FROM GETTING TOO BIG.” SMART MOVE BY THOSE ROMANS. THE BAND DECIDED THAT, AMIDST THEIR SKYROCKET TO PLATINUM SUCCESS AND THE WAY THEY ARE LOOKED UP TO BY FANS, THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD REMINDER TO STAY HUMBLE. AND AN ALBUM THEME WAS BORN.

BY DOUG VAN PELT

“...So many people don’t believe, experienced that

“It’s not meant to be this morbid, you know, ‘We’re gonna die and the world’s gonna end!’” explains Pat. “It’s more of, like: ‘Recognize how precious your time is right now. Be careful. The days are evil. Your life is gonna be over and you might only have this day with which to love people and to carry out the purpose God has for your life.’”

“We came up with the name of the record,” elaborates Lacey Mosley (aka Lacey Sturm), “and we gave it to Pat, who does a lot of wood cutting ... and he did this amazing wood cut of that scene – of a king coming back from battle victorious and a slave behind him and in the picture you get (that) I was a slave and the rest of the guys are different characters in the army, like an archer or a drummer, a medic. There’s different stories in that picture, like the dry bones coming to life and you can see different stories that go along with the *Momento Mori* theme. Everyone kind of played off from there. We figured out our videos and our photo shoots and how we’re going to dress and how we present ourselves.”

The band is serious about the theme, too. From the album artwork to every visual piece, this album will reflect that theme. I brought along my camera to get some candid, behind-the-scenes-during-the-interview type shots and Lacey gently but directly replied with one of those spontaneous-sounding statements like, “Nah, we better not. We want to be very purposeful with how we look and how we present ourselves this time.” So, instead of Flyleaf members and their family eating BBQ here, you instead get a look at the menu, the mounted ram on the wall, and the sign out front of Schoepf’s.

“We want to emphasize the *Momento Mori* theme,” Lacey continues. “We’re rock stars, but we’re making a parody on rock stars, with signs of degradation, with tears and stuff like that (showing) that they wear out and all that stuff.”

It’s funny how much of a contradiction this theme is with the actual characters in the band. Collectively and individually they’re about the farthest away from pretense a rock band could be, wearing their small-town Texas charm like a comfortable hat that hides its presence from the head due to familiarity and fit. Lacey is even shorter than her on-stage image in real life. She showed me around the restaurant like it was an old haunt, which was still bristling with happy clients after 1 p.m. when most lunch rushes were over. She proudly pointed out where they added a new dining area here and a whole new serving line that led customers past the cooks and servers cafeteria-style. It would have been hard to imagine Lacey making the reach herself with her tiny frame before her band’s success and touring schedule took her from this food service job. But, judging by the greetings and treatment she received from the folks there, it sounds like she was a treasured employee.

Guitarists Sameer Bhattacharya and Jared Hartmann weren’t able to make it for our sit-down interview, so I wasn’t able to gauge their personalities on anything but what I’d seen on stage – calm, driven and thoughtful. Turns out that Pat, drummer James Culpepper and Lacey were only too happy to call Jared out on his obsession with the video game *Warcraft*.

Pat is refered to as “Paccoon” by the band’s drum tech, Joel, because his eyeliner runs and he looks like a raccoon with giant black circles around his eyes not many songs into the set.

As briefly mentioned before, woodcarving is one of Pat’s serious hobbies. He’s got a complete kit with lots of carving knives. Lacey chimes in teasingly to point out that he keeps them all “in his big kaboodle” while on the road, where he’ll spend spare time between shows carving out intricate stuff.

“When we’re home,” Pat explains, “James (Culpepper, drummer) has a sweet, crazy hideout ranch. We go out and shoot guns and horse around. He’s always building something that you’d never imagine some dude doing, like he built a bridge across the creek one day. He’s got all kinds of stuff going on out there.”

“James likes living in a tent,” adds Lacey, “even though he has this big house on the land. He stays out there and he’s got this old car out there that his dad hit a cow with, so it doesn’t drive, but the battery still works. So he put it out by his tent and he put up a sheet and a projector and it’s like this huge movie screen out there that he watches movies on.”

“That car’s a story in itself,” Pat continues. “One day we got to practice and (notice) he had stayed up all night. His dad, driving at night, hit this cow that jumped out, and so he had to go euthanize the cow and butcher him on the spot. He had a freezer full of cow.”

“I just finished it,” James confirms. “Took about a year.”

These are the types of things that you’d only hear about from a band out of Texas, and you might not pull stories like this out of ‘em if you weren’t passin’ the time in a genuine, down-home barbeque joint.

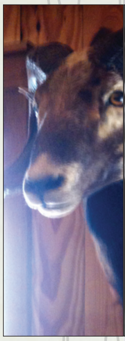
The band is thrilled with their new album. “I hope I’m not jinxing anything for us,” laughs Pat a good two months before the release date. “We’ve had so many people talking about how hard it is to write a second album…” (the dreaded sophomore slump). “But, thankfully we had such a good amount of time allotted to us after the first one, you know, after the tour and stuff, we had a lot of time at home to really focus and write. I feel really relieved and good about the songs. I think there are 13 songs on that album, and we were (even) thinking, ‘Maybe it’s too long’ or something. We were like, ‘No! We want every song on there!’ And with that budget there wasn’t one that got thrown away. I’m really proud of that. We did our best, and whether it’s successful or not, we gave it the best shot we had.”

The band shouldn’t have much to worry about. Tunes like “Beautiful Bride” jump right out of the speakers with a solid metallic thump that will satisfy their million-plus fans. There’s less blood-curdling screaming going on this time, but “tough” would still be an adept description for these 13 tunes. “Again” has a hypnotic riff that should find its way onto every rock station’s playlist, and the trademark dynamics of Lacey’s singing from low and rhythmic to higher accented counter-lines are framed perfectly in one good choice for the lead-off single. Flyleaf seems to have pulled off what was hoped for by both fans and the financial backers at the label: They’ve delivered something that builds on their debut’s identity, shows true progression, and yet stays true to that edgy, melodic rock with an edge that hints at the kind of scary-core metal bands they’ve toured with.

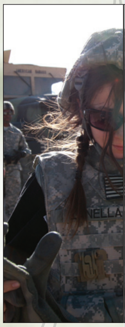
It’s apparent that more purpose and thought went into these songs than just sitting four guys and a gal in a rehearsal room and pressing the “rock” button. When they slow down a notch and lean on Lacey’s singing skills, like in “The Kind” and the creative use of whispers in “Swept Away” and “In The Dark,” they speed up and swell up with a dynamic shift of heaviness that might best be felt in big, full arenas. They rock their listeners so well that, by the time they really hit the brakes for a ballad, like “Tiny Heart,” they’ll have captured the attention of the listener. This is no small feat in a day when singles seem to get more attention than full-length albums, but passionate songs about the love of God for people (in the show-stopping “Treasure” and its companion “Circle”) make the journey from beginning to end worthwhile and satisfying.

Those that’ve had the pleasure of seeing the band live no doubt remember the part of their set where they play a couple of worshipful tunes, including a cover of David Crowder Band’s “You Are My Joy.” It shouldn’t have been a surprise that DCB would return the favor and cover Flyleaf’s “All Around Me” on the band’s new *Church Music* album.

“The first time I heard ‘All Around Me,’” Crowder explains, “I was in the parking lot of a grocery store in Waco, Texas and immediately I knew this song would be perfectly creepy with a piano, vocal and some weird noises. Sure enough, it was.”



SCHO
OLD TIME PI
We C



because they have never feeling of God showing up."

"I thought it was such a good version of it," Lacey affirms in a to-the-point way that belies her familiarity with real, authentic and passionate worship.

My experience at multiple Flyleaf shows forced me to ask more. "For the uninitiated," I asked, "how would you describe the presence of God during worship?" She just pointed to the song, as if no other words would add to or assist the explanation. "I think 'All Around Me' kind of tells of the first experience I had whenever I felt God show up in a room. It kind of describes that feeling.

"At the last Franklin Graham show, we played Rock The River for the Franklin Graham tour (in August). It was a hard decision to make and I ended up meeting with Franklin Graham and his heart was so good and so right, I'm glad we did it. But I just looked out at all these people at the end and I realized that so many people don't believe, because they have never experienced that feeling of God showing up. I just remember praying for that when we were going into 'All Around Me,' like, 'God, please have mercy on these people and show up and let them feel and know that You love them and that You're not far off, but You're right here.'

"We talk about worship being your life, you know, everything you do, you can make worship out of it. You can worship God with everything you do with your life – every conversation you have, every act of anything you do – your work, your place, anything. But there's something different about sitting still and giving God your attention, putting your attention on and meditating on God and Who He is. There's nothing apart from God. Thinking about that and recognizing Him everywhere and to just sit still enough to do that. I just think there's something different in that. That makes me feel like you're in the room with God. Our pastor always says, 'The reward of walking with Jesus is walking with Jesus.' If you've ever been in a place of worship where you felt like you were sitting next to Jesus or that He was standing in front of you, there's nothing better than that feeling. It's like finally you're home. You're where you're meant to be. All the searching in life, where you try to attain that. Even in a relationship we get close. I think that's the closest thing you get to it – a loving human relationship. People get so confused sometimes when they experience love from a person.

"This happens to me, even with fans in a short, brief encounter, I'll pray, 'God, let me love them like You want me to. Let me say what You would say to them. This might be their only chance to hear from You.' And then they'll hear that. I'll say something and it'll touch their spirit, because it's like it's from God. What they experienced was the Spirit of Jesus. They experience it when we play. And then they think, 'Oh, this is Flyleaf. Oh, this is Lacey. This is what Lacey makes me feel like' or 'This is what Flyleaf makes me feel like.' And then, when we walk away, we just pray so hard, 'God, please take the glory for Yourself and chase them in their life. Don't let them walk away and quit experiencing You, so that they know it's not from us, but from You and You're everywhere and You're always chasing them to romance them and draw them to Yourself, that they can experience that in their bathroom with the door locked on the floor, just sitting still, wanting to talk to You.'"

EPF'S
T BAR-B-QUE
ater!

Did we do enough?

In my experience as an observer and a journalist, there is one common denominator or characteristic that I've noticed in people that I would consider "humble." In some of the men who put their well-being and their reputation on the line in the late-'80s movement "Operation Rescue" and that scene at the end of *Schindler's List*, there is that awareness of the big picture or the large, heart-breaking problem. When these men had a moment to reflect on what they had done and possibly realize their participation in something heroic, they instead focused on the unfinished business. In that climactic movie scene, Liam Neeson's character, Schindler, could not be consoled over the fact that "there were so many more that could have been saved."

I again witnessed a similar (and almost sacred) moment in the isolated dining room at Schoepf's when Lacey described their recent trip to visit some troops in Afghanistan. "We went over to a base there that nobody went to..." She stopped to confer with James to properly identify the name of the base – Baylough.

"It's way out in the middle of basically wherever the Taliban hide out," James narrates. "They're just kind of holding the fort there. They try to help the communities in the area. It's really, really dangerous, so not a whole lot of people go out there. Not a lot of people are *allowed* to go out there. We had to wear body armor. Some of those places all we could bring was one acoustic guitar. We brought ourselves and met the troops over there. We barely missed a lot of things, too," explains James. "The day before and the days after we left, people were killed and stuff."

"Yeah, the one that we went to, there was 30 or 40 troops there," Lacey continues. "We got to get face-to-face and play a bit and then we got to talk to them. We talked to a couple of the guys for hours. And one of the guys that I talked to was a medic and he used to be a youth pastor. And all these horrible things happened to him and he kind of walked away and we got to talk to him about all that stuff and talk through it with him and whenever we left we got an email from him saying that he had rededicated his life to the Lord and ... about two days after we left, four people were killed. On that day that this happened he emailed us about it and said he was the first one on the scene and even though it was a horrible situation and there was nothing he could do for him, he knew that the captain was with the Lord. I remember looking at the... There's a man in charge of sending groups out. He's in charge of lifting the troops' morale, and so that's why he brought us out there for. I looked at him, because he's kind of like a fatherly figure. He was like one of the early Jesus movement people from the '70s. He was a hippie, we could tell. He had a real scraggly beard and just a real loving person and everyone looked up to him like a father and I felt like that when I met him. After we found out that that happened I saw him and as soon as I saw him, I just started crying and I was like..." She pauses to apologize that she's going to cry now as she relates the story.

Lacey looks over my shoulder as she relived the moment and her eyes well up like large saucers of egg white and tiny red capillaries, moist with emotion, and she repeats her own words: "'Did we do what we were supposed to do? Did we?'" She shakes a little as if the conversation was happening at the very moment. "'Did you think we did everything we were supposed to do?' And he just..." She lets out a sigh and takes a breath. "... And he took my face in his hands and he said, 'Lacey, you did more than you were supposed to do. You did it. Because that was the last time that those people had a chance to hear anything about their salvation.'

"I don't know if I said enough, I don't know if I was brave enough to speak what I was supposed to, and he just kept saying, 'You did what you were supposed to do. You did more than you were supposed to do.' I just had to believe that, because I was really overwhelmed with the idea that we were the last people to go and talk to these people – and they were so young. Some of the guys out there are just 18 years old."

There are times when someone cries in front of you or they seemingly act "too hard on themselves" and the almost natural instinct is to nurture and comfort them. In the case of the humble brokenness exhibited in this band of believers, this would be one of those times to resist any well-meaning "corrective" measures; because, as it turns out, you'd probably be wrong. These tender hearts that might seem overly attentive of God's will and direction are probably right where God wants them. And we would do well ourselves to remember our mortality.

✖

"DON'T LET MATT THIESSEN FOOL YOU. RELIENT
DOWN, MAY BE ABOUT MATT'S MOST RECENT AND
DOESN'T SUCK. VERY CASUAL AND DOWN TO
LARGER-THAN-LIFE EXPERIENCE AS BEING THE LEAD
INTERNATIONALLY WELL-KNOWN CHRISTIAN POP
CONTRIBUTIONS. SOMETIMES IT IS HARD TO REMEMBER
ALL DO DAILY, SUCH AS COOKING AND CLEANING.

"Right now I'm hanging out at my house, it is laundry day today, so I'm going to do that," Thiessen first explained. "And then, my friend is in this band Day of Fail and the record label that I work for is trying to sign them so we are going to see them play tonight."

This is just a day in the life of Matt and the rest of the members of Relient K, lead guitarist Matt Hoopes, bassist John Warne, guitarist Jon Schneck and drummer Ethan Luck. But in addition to his band and record label work, Matt is also planning his next upcoming collaborations.

"It would be fun to write with Katy Perry on her next record. She has always been fun to write lyrics with and stuff back in the day. Then there are other people too, like Rhett Miller of the Old 97's, we're supposed to write together and I'm a huge fan, and he's a really great alt-country writer and he recorded his solo record with this guy John Bryan, who is like my dream producer," Thiessen gushed. "I also get to go up to New York and hang out with Adam Schlesinger of Fountains of Wayne, it will be really fun to meet him, I'm a huge fan of his as well. So there's lots of really cool things going on."

But aside from those many side collaborations and projects, Thiessen and the other band members' dedication to each other in Relient K is apparent, considering they are now in their 11th year as a band.

"I think the band is obviously going to change a lot because we were 16 when we started and we're 29 now, but it has been a really cool band, because it always had this unique vibe," Thiessen explained. "I don't hear a lot of the same stuff about my friends' bands. I like that everyone is still in the band after 10 years, that's pretty cool. If everybody on the bus is stoked to be on the bus, if everyone in the band is happy to be in the band, and we all want to work together and make it happen, as long as everybody is a good dude and we're all bros it is going to be great and it is going to be some of the best times of our lives."

So what does cause a band with such staying power to reach points of monotony? "Playing the same cities all the time," Thiessen confesses. "Like showing up in Bakersfield, California for the third time in a year? That's where it gets a little tough, just because forces beyond your control are turning this into a regular job, but you've got to make the best of it. But we have a lot of fun on the road and a lot of fun hanging out with each other and we hang out with each other a lot when we are off the road, too."

But a key element to keeping the band fresh is the songwriting, which is mainly done by Thiessen.

"I've tried to change as a songwriter over the last few years," Thiessen explains. "My new thing is when I write songs I try to be super honest and everything that I write down is something that I mean and something that makes sense to me. I mean, I know a lot of bands that write songs and sometimes they just put in lyrics that rhyme, or they put in something that is there because it sounds cool or it's hooky and I'm trying to find stuff that yeah maybe rhymes and sounds cool and is hooky, but I also want it to be exactly what I mean and exactly what is on the heart. It takes me longer to write lyrics that way but it makes every song a unique little flower, its own thing. It's never going to be stale."

And the careful and delicate work Matt makes with each flower … er, uhm, song… has certainly taken effect on *Forget And Not Slow Down*, where he has written about the painful end to a meaningful relationship in his life. Early tracks on the record, including "I Don't Need A Soul" and the title track, "Forget and Not Slow Down," have a lilting tone despite their painful words about the break-up, while later tracks progress the album as Matt's healing from the relationship also progresses, as is shown in the songs

BY KELLY KETTERING

K'S NEWEST ALBUM, *FORGET AND NOT SLOW*
PAINFUL BREAK UP, BUT HIS LIFE MOST CERTAINLY
EARTH, MATT EARNESTLY SPOKE TO *HM* ABOUT HIS
SINGER AND SONGWRITER FOR ONE OF THE MOST
BANDS, AS WELL AS HIS OTHER MUSICAL INDUSTRY
THAT SUCH PEOPLE ALSO DO THE OTHER THINGS WE

A
7B
kung ōt cay

"Therapy" and "This Is The End."

"Yeah, it's definitely a break-up record," Thiessen states. "That was just kind of what was happening in my life at the time of writing it. I moved out to a lake house in the middle of nowhere Tennessee by myself and kind of sat there and fiddled with some instruments and went canoeing some days, or I got up to go for a run and then would sit and write songs. For me it was pretty hard, the break-up thing. So I just dealt with it, prayed about it and definitely got myself through it and I felt like I am pretty strong about the whole thing and it will hopefully make a good record that people can relate to. I mean, obviously, there were other things going on, too, with the relationship. This one was a pretty serious one, so the ramifications of how your family feels about the break-up, how the outside world looks at you and all these things, you can deal with that on a lot of different levels. The songs can be applied to more in life than just girl/guy situations, but definitely the way to learn some lessons."

Not only is Thiessen a master at converting his own raw emotions into music and lyrics, he has a way of being able to adapt his talents to the work of other artists. Most recently, for example, with Adam Young of the indie rock outfit Owl City.

"Adam Young from Owl City is a really cool kid. One of the sweetest guys I have ever met in my life," Thiessen gushes. "He actually came out to that lake house where I wrote (*Forget And Not Slow Down*) and we worked on songs for a couple of days. His ideas are great and he's great. He let me shuffle some things around and throw my opinion around in there. And then I went out to Minnesota where he recorded his record and I got to sing a few vocals and do some more work on some songs."

But their musical partnership didn't end there. After working on the latest Owl City album, Thiessen brought in Young to contribute to a Relient K track that he was unsure of the music direction he wanted to take it in.

"For our record I wrote a song but I really didn't want to finish the music of it, I didn't really know what genre what music I wanted to do it in, so I gave it to him, and I played the chorus and the melodies and I sang it and he wrote this entire track around it which sounds like Owl City. So we have a Relient K song that basically, I didn't really do any of the instruments other than the acoustic guitar, everything is Adam. And that is going to be the B-side on our record on our international release and stuff. So it's been a really cool relationship meeting him."

But both personal and professional relationships aside, Thiessen knows that the relationship that he must keep closest to his heart is his relationship with God.

"Every day of my life my faith is playing a very major role in the decisions that I make and the person that I am trying to be. Whenever it is time to have serious thoughts and sit down and think about important things, that's prayer to me," Thiessen explained. "I sit down and talk to God about it. That plays into the songwriting a whole lot, and into the music a whole lot. But, it is just my perspective. It's my introspective way of looking at the world. But I know everyone doesn't agree with me and I know I'm not perfect but I definitely think Jesus teaches us some good things and when you apply them to your life…it's cool to watch it flourish like that."

✖

OLIVE TREE CLOTHING

"God built us the way we are for a reason. We did not come out of a slot machine with random talents and abilities. We are designed with the passions we have because God knows that through His power, our passions can turn into actions. Our actions can turn into worship, and our worship can turn into ministry.

God built me with a passion for graphic design. The designs, through His power, turned into inspirational clothing. The clothing does nothing but reflect the majesty of God as an act of worship, and the outcome is Olive Tree Clothing - an affective ministry not because I created it. Not because the designs are trendy, but because I quit putting hope in my own talents and abilities, and began to put hope in Christ."

FIND OUT MORE AT OLIVETREECLOTHING.COM

What **Black Label Society** Says

OKAY, WE ALL KNOW ZAKK WYLDE HAS A CRAZY REPUTATION. I'VE SEEN HIM LIVE A FEW TIMES WITH OZZY AND WITH HIS OWN BLACK LABEL SOCIETY. I'VE EVEN BEEN AROUND TO SEE THE AFTERMATH OF HIM GOING BALLISTIC TOWARDS ONE OF THE BARKERS OF THE JIM ROSE CIRCUS AT AN OZZFEST. I THOUGHT I KNEW THE GUY AND KNEW WHAT TO EXPECT. PART OF ME WAS RIGHT (WHEN IT CAME TO DISCUSSING FAITH), BUT I NEVER EXPECTED TO HAVE THE PHONE PASSED AROUND TO THE VARIOUS BAND MEMBERS AS EACH OF THEM CHIMED IN WITH THEIR PREDICTION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE TERRELL OWENS FIRING FROM DALLAS. GO FIGURE.

Photo: Neil Zlowzower

What's your name, buddy? (asks a road manager)

This is Doug Van Pelt.
Okay, Doug. Hold on one second. Let me get the boys on the phone for ya.

Okay. (long silent pause)
Hold on, Doug. Is this Doug? Doug, what's going on, man? This is Zakk, brother.

Hey, Zakk. Doin' good. How ‘bout yourself?
Ah, busy. Sittin' here with my gay brothers I brought in. We're laughing our (bleep) off. Where you at, bro?

Austin, Texas.
Oh my! That's Dimebag country, bro.

Yes, indeed.
Without a doubt. So, how's everything going down there, bro?

Oh, pretty good. It's cold today. We got some rain finally. We've been having a drought.
How ‘bout your Dallas Cowboys, man? Why'd they get rid of TO, bro?

Well, dude, they were going to pay 8 million to keep him and they paid 9 million to let him go, so they must've really wanted to let him go.
I don't get it. I mean… I'm a New York Giants fan. TO is the (bleep). I don't care what anybody says. The bottom line is the Cowboys never threw to him ever! All I've got to say, if you've got a super talented guy like that, use him!

I agree, but, uh…
Name me a better wide receiver in the NFL right now.

He's great…
You've got Randy Moss. I'd take TO over Randy Moss. Use him every play. We could use him any way we want. We could put him on tight end. We could put him anywhere. Hold on. Let me have you talk to your brother over here on the black and yellow view. (takes phone across room) Mark? Pittsburgh Steelers: Would you take Terrell Owens on your team?

Talent-wise? Yes. Attitude? No.

Why attitude-wise no? Is he going to disrupt the Pittsburgh Steelers clubhouse?

Right. Remember he was doing…

Hold on, Doug. Let me put you on the phone with Mark. Hold on.

(laughs)
Hey Doug, how you doing?

Good. How are you doing, Mark?
I'm sorry. You're from Dallas, that's alright. The thing with TO is he's a great receiver, but what he does to the clubhouse and the morale brings everybody down. Maybe if you threw him on Arizona, where you had Fitzgerald and Anquan Boldin. They're great receivers, but he'd bring 'em down. And you'd destroy the morale around you. So, now Boldin and Fitzgerald are on his list. He's a great receiver, but what he does to the clubhouse is not worth it, ya know?

It seems like it.
But other than that, bro. Let me put you back on with Zakk.

Hold on a second. Here ya go. I need to know on the Black Label where we are. Hold on a second. Talk to Moby for a second. (turns to Moby) He's a Cowboy guy. We're talking about TO. You wouldn't take TO as well.

No, he'd bring them down.

I hate TO. He's spoiled. On the Cardinals? No. I've got Fitzgerald and Boldin. I don't need him.

Okay. I'm going to give you back to Zakk.

(Zakk takes the phone once more to another guy) Dougie, hold on a second. Here's Belogio.

I'd take Terrell Owens on the New York football Giants any day of the week.

I'm glad you didn't get him!
There you go, Doug. Game over! If me and you own the Giants or the Cowboys, we're taking TO.

> ***"That's the Black Label way. You always respect. You love the good Lord, you love Jesus Christ. You know what I mean?"***

Yeah. I'm pissed off that the Cowboys gave the Giants Chris Canty.
I don't know what they're doing. I mean, the bottom line. You know how it is with the Cowboys. They're expected to win every year, bro. Roger Staubach and Randy White and everything. All the legends, man. They're the New York Yankees, you know what I mean? They're expected to win it. Them getting rid of TO? I don't get it. Dude, just throw him the ball. He's getting pissed off at legitimate reasons. You know what I mean? He's going, "What the (bleep), man? What? You don't want to throw to me? What the (bleep)'s going on here?"

Yeah.
Look at Tony Romo. Look at Roger Staubach. He ain't a Dallas Cowboys quarterback. Roger said that, bro. "You know what's expected of you being a Dallas Cowboys quarterback?" That's coming from Roger, bro. There ya go. He's a (bleep) idiot, dude! Going out with Jessica Simpson, dude.

Yeah. He could have a lot better taste in women, I tell ya.
Yeah. You'd never see (bleep) Roger Staubach doing stupid (bleep) like that, dude! Game over. So, anyways, what else is going on, brother? Let's knock this (bleep) thing out, dude.

Well, I've got my tape recorder rolling. I'm ready for an interview if you are.
Let's knock it out, bro.

Okay, if you were a heavy metal doctor and you just gave the band Black Label Society a checkup, what would be the results? How is the band's musical health these days?
The only thing I think I'd find is steroids, alcohol, (bleep). Let's see what else we can involve. Just pure sex. A lot of violence. But a lot of love and a lot of caring and caressing. You've gotta bring the violence back in as well, so, ya know… (laughs)

I wonder if when you're playing songs from Ozzy's first two albums that you might think about the guitarist who wrote those riffs. How does it feel sort of being in Randy Rhoads' shoes?
Well, nah, man. I worship the ground Randy Rhoads… Without Randy Rhoads, there'd be no Zakk Wylde or Dimebag. That's our guy. I thank the good Lord every day and, you know, Jesus Christ. I'm blessed, man. I've had Randy in my life. He'll always be there. He's a part of me. You know what I mean?

Yeah.
That's the Black Label way. You always respect. You love the good Lord, you love Jesus Christ. You know what I mean? You're loving the people in kind. You take the piss out of self-love. It's all about family. That's about it.

Well, cool. I'm going to skip to another question here I've got that's relevant. What do you think of Jesus Christ?
That's my guy. There you go. B-L-S, G-O-D. S-D-M-F: Strength, Determination, Merciless, Forever. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, amen. There you go.

Alright. What do you think of His claims to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me?"
What did you say, bro?

What do you think of His claims to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me?"
The whole thing is this: The whole message is… Even Oz did this. You know what? You know what God is, Doug? He goes, just add another "o." He's good. So, be nice to people. You be kind and you be loving. That's all you've got to do, man. We all go through trial and (bleep) tribulations and (bleep), but the bottom line is: You're a (bleep) (bleep) if you (bleep) with me. You know what I mean? If you can help somebody else, if you're doing better than the other person, you help 'em out, man. That's it. And that's the bottom line and I don't give a (bleep) what anybody says. You know what I'm talking about, Doug.

Yeah.
The bottom line is you just be beautiful to people and that's about it, man. You work your (bleep) balls off and do what the (bleep) you've gotta do. The crew will get home and the old lady can (bleep) hook up with you and you can have a love child if you get lucky enough and Terrell Owens is back on the Cowboys or he's with the Giants, I don't know! I just have a fun, good time. I know the truth, man. I speak to God all the time.

Cool. Me, too.
That's the (bleep) truth. I thank Him all the time. All the beautiful (bleep) He's given me. It makes me want to work (bleep) hard and take care of all the kids at St. Judes and that? He told me to (bleep) do it and we're doing it. That's the Black Label way.

That's awesome. How do you feel about musicians or fans making a mockery of God?
Um, it's just (bleep) entertainment or whatever. You know what I mean? It's just like… Some of it's shock value. Some people… I mean, with Ozzy, people say he's a Satanist or this… I go, "Dude! Every night Ozzy's on stage he says (bleep) God bless everybody. He wears a crucifix around his (bleep) neck, you stupid (bleep) (bleep)! What the (bleep) are you talking about? I mean, he loves God. That's ultimate power. He created darkness. He created everything. Once you figure that out, then you can move on. People are going, 'Oh, you know, when bad things happen in your (bleep) life, the bottom line is… If anything like that happens to me, I just… The reason why you put God upon you is so some kid doesn't have to deal with you running out on you (bleep). Bring the (bleep) darkness! Bring the (bleep) pain! If you're one with Jesus Christ, that's the way it (bleep) goes. Do I want it? No. I'd rather be hanging out at the (bleep) bar hanging out with the guys, but if some little munchkin little kid doesn't want to (bleep) have to deal with this (bleep) pounding, I'll take it. You know what I mean?

Yeah. That's cool.
I'll (bleep) deal with it. That's the way it rolls. And that's a (bleep) fact.

[Hey guys. This is Penny. Just checking in. One question left.]

Oh boy! I've got a bunch more questions.

[laughs… Sorry!]

Crap! Um… Okay, I've got one and you can kind of go as fast as you want to…
Just lay it on me.

If you were teaching a musical appreciation class, and were going to make a brief introduction of the following artists, as well as play a song or two, what would you say about the following bands I'm going to list off, and what songs would you play for your class?

Lynyrd Skynyrd

Proof God exists. There ya go.

Pantera

Proof God exists.

And let me know which songs you'd play for the class, too.

Basically anything by any of them. Just one note…

Black Sabbath

Proof God exists.

Led Zeppelin

Proof God exists.

UFO

Proof God exists. Super talented musicians.

Metallica

Without a doubt. Proof God exists. There you go.

Iron Maiden

Proof God exists. Steve Harris and company. There you go.

Stryper

Who's that, bro?

Stryper?

Oh, Stryper. They're all sweethearts. Do you ever run into any of those guys?

I'm good friends. The lead singer. His wife just died…

Proof God exists. They're good people, man. They're (bleep) kickin' musicians and (bleep) like that, you know what I mean? Good guys.

Aerosmith

Without a doubt. God exists. Stones or the Beatles on steroids.

Jimi Hendrix

My son's named Hendrix, so there you go! Proof's in the pudding there, man!

Anyone else you'd like to add?

Elton John. Billy Joel. Dude, you could just keep going. Guns 'N Roses. The real musicians that do it for the real reasons. Somebody asked me one day, "You know what, man? Everybody picks up a guitar to play music, because they wanna get laid and all that (bleep)." I just go, "No! I didn't sit around and practice 12 (bleep) hours a (bleep) day, which I still do and workin' my balls off because I want to get a piece of (bleep). I've been married for 24 (bleep) years. I've got my wife and trials and tribulations and the ups and downs and all that (bleep) and that's the way it's gonna (bleep) be, but the whole thing is, if you think I pick up a (bleep) (bleep) guitar and work at that (bleep) thing every day and practice and everything like that and I've got a shrine of Randy Rhoads and Eddie Van Halen and (bleep) Jimi Hendrix and all the guys, Robin Trower, Frank Marino, all the (bleep) guys, Al DiMeola, all the preservers that came before me, I go, do you think I (bleep) do this to (bleep) get a piece of (bleep)?" If I wanted to I could take my Les Paul and bash over the back of some (bleep)'s head and (bleep) have sex with her, you know what I'm saying? The bottom line is the Good Lord gave me a gift and you practice your (bleep) balls off and you what the (bleep) you've gotta do. And you're thankful and you be respectful. And that's that.

You take it easy, Zakk.

Alright, Doug. Take care of yourself, man.

✖

TRACY
TOWNS
SHREDS

WWW.TRACYTOWNS.COM

THE RADIANCE EFFECT
SEPARATE & CHANGE

Listen to Separate & Change
The Brand New Album From
www.theradianceeffect.com
myspace.com/theradianceeffect
The Radiance Effect
Avaliable on iTunes and Amazon.com
For those who enjoy: Anberlin, Switchfoot, Thrice, Dashboard Confessional, and The Almost

circuitRyder
rock & roll missions thailand

Greetings from Chiang Mai, Thailand

My name is Gary Lansdowne. My wife and I are with Youth With A Mission, which is an international, interdenominational Christian missions organization. I have been a volunteer with YWAM since 1991; my wife since 1994. The main emphasis of what we do is Music Outreach and Mercy Services. My wife is also an English teacher.

One of the best forms of communication with the youth is through music. It crosses all language and national differences. There have been so many incredible opportunites to go to places where people would not expect this kind of message. Clubs, bars, prisons, military bases, open-air stages, festivals, etc. In most of the venues we are asked the same question: "Why do you come to a place like this?" The answer is simple: "This is where Jesus would come."

Most people think of a "missions trip" as going to another Country and visiting an orphanage, building a school or church. These are wonderful things to do and we have been part of some of these things. Being a carpenter, painter, plumber, teacher or doctor are incredible gifts that help so many needy, less fortunate people in many countries.

Since 1996, we have helped various Christian rock bands from 14 Countries play in 10 different Nations. Most musicians we have worked with you probably would not know. The best known artists that we have had the privledge of working with is Blindside (Sweden), Andy Hunter (UK) and Disciple (USA).

Thailand is a mostly Buddhist nation with a population of over 65,000,000 people. 70% of this population is age 35 and under. Christians make up 1.65% of the population. The average per capita family income is $8,000 USD.

I am asking you to consider being a part of a Music & Missions outreach. Because of the Internet, MTV and myspace, you can hear the same styles of music played in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

You will not make any money and most people will have no idea of who you are, but you would have an opportunity to touch young people with the love of God.

We are also involved with serving the Burmese refugees on the Thailand/Burma border. One week a month, we travel to Mae Sot and volunteer with a Burmese Migrant School. We have been able to go into the Mae La Refugee Camp which is home to over 48,000 people.

If you are interested in how your band can be involved with a Music & Missions outreach in Thailand, please contact us at: **circuitryderrock@gmail.com**

For other info: **www.myspace.com/circuitryder**
Thailand phone number: 0066-847712831

Album reviews

49 ALBUMS 57 ENTERTAINMENT, BOOKS & GADGETS

Rating system

05 *CLASSIC*
04 *FABULOUS*
03 *SOLID*
02 *SUSPECT*
01 *AMISS*
***** *1/2*

THE ALMOST

MONSTER MONSTER

Aaron Gillespie – in his day job role with the hugely popular Underoath – helps create the kind of rock and roll that wildly excites most HM readers. But, at the risk of biting the metal-horn-hands that feed him, this critic gets much more excited about The Almost, Gillespie's "side project." Monster Monster is this act's second release, and is, by all accounts, its first truly band effort. But whereas many of Underoath's tracks come off more like noisy exercises in youthful angst, The Almost consistently stick with traditional song structures – you know, verses, choruses, melodies – the works. And little things like these make Monster Monster so darn compelling.

You'd likely never hear a pedal steel guitar part on an Underoath recording, but that's exactly what drives the gentle ballad, "Hand Grenade." The man at the wheel on this particular one is none other than Chris Scruggs, grandson of bluegrass banjo master, Earl Scruggs. Power-popper John Davis also helped out on this track (and others), and his melodic influence is abundantly obvious throughout this highly sing-along-able release. Other highlights include "Hands," for its handclapping rhythm and welcome inclusion of keyboards, and "Monster," which begins with just vocal and dobro (yes, believe it or not, there's real dobro!), and then escalates into a guitar rock jam that brings to mind the classic Eric Clapton-assisted Beatles jam, "While My Guitar Gently Weeps."

Gillespie also deserves kudos for his vocal performances, which oftentimes carry with them a Replacements, Paul Westerberg-esque world weariness. Lyrically, these songs mainly concern the struggles we all experience while trying to behave like decent human beings, in a world where circumstances and adverse cultural pressures conspire to make us do the exact opposite. Theologically speaking, we were all born a bunch of Frankensteins; primitive, klutzy monsters, if you will. But with The Almighty's help, and plenty of it, we can shed some of our natural traits and act in love, rather than react with anger and violence. Underoath fans, which are likely sworn to loyalty, need not feel like traitors for appreciating The Almost. Aaron Gillespie's inner classic rocker is a benevolent beast, and the music he makes with The Almost is scary good. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] DAN MACINTOSH~~

FLYLEAF

MOMENTO MORI

For a band teeming with so much life and vitality, the members of Flyleaf sure focus on death a lot. Their long-awaited follow-up to the smash self-titled debut, *Memento Mori* is a Latin phrase meaning "be mindful of death" and song titles offer the same (i.e. "Missing," "Have We Lost," and "Break Your Knees"). But no matter the subject matter, it's quite easy to see why Lacey Mosley & Co. absolutely blew up over the last four years. Lead single "Again" features the familiar layered vocals of Mosley and the memorable guitar work of Sameer Bhattacharya and Jared Hartmann. Spiritual themes abound throughout the collection and here Mosley sings a relatable story of "here you are down on your knees again … and only surrender will help you now." The inventive hard rock anthem "Beautiful Bride" speaks of the glory of the church as the bride of Christ. Throughout *Memento Mori*, Mosley offers spoken statements of Scripture or her own personal journey. She warns against an attempt to serve both God and money on "The Kind," a searing take on Jesus' words on the same topic. Later, "Treasure" finds Mosley reflecting back on her salvation experience, "That night I felt like I'd become something treasured and different." Themes of death and resurrection are laid atop throughout the strong rock foundations crafted by this Texas five-piece. Sometimes it's a caution against what will starve your soul and others glory in the new life in Christ. Either way, Flyleaf's a band focused on the right things, both lyrically and musically. ~~[A&M/OCTONE] MATT CONNER~~

ABEL

THE HONEST LOVE EP

Apparently the message and music are of equal importance for the New York threesome known as Abel. Their new EP on Facedown Records, *The Honest Love*, is unflinchingly Christian, and speaks candidly about the triumphs and tragedies of the spiritual life. Yet in the process, they belie the maxim that the music typically sucks with bands so centered on their message. "And I pray/Let it be beautiful" sings vocalist Kevin Kneifel on "My Melody," and there's no denying the entire affair is sonically pleasing. "Dressed Like A King" and "The World Sings" follow suit with musical tides that effortlessly flow in and out. The ever-building melodies will delight fans of Deas Vail or Alexander and provide a tender option for Facedown's marketing team. ~~[DREAMT] MATT CONNER~~

RELIENT K

FORGET AND NOT SLOW DOWN

If *Forget and Not Slow Down* is a signal of things to come, it's soon going to be hard to call Relient K a pop-punk band anymore. But then again, all of lead vocalist Matt Thiessen's past keyboard-oriented songs, made it increasingly difficult to uphold the group's punk credentials. A three-song, semi-desert-themed middle section, consisting of "Sahara," "Oasis," and "Savannah," oftentimes touches upon jazz and classic pop elements, instead. Yet, as the group's musical palate expands, Thiessen's lyrical focus continues to be wonderfully narrow. He's constantly trying to figure out how to make relationships work. On "Therapy," for example, he asks God to respond to his appeal because some significant other isn't returning his calls. After a while, however, it's hard to take Thiessen's woe-is-me attitude too seriously. If a guy thinks this deeply about girls' feelings, he must be a great catch, right? But then again, Leonard Cohen has made a living out of being perpetually depressed, even though he must, most certainly, experience happiness now and again. So on second thought, Matt, do not forget or slow down all the angst. ~~[JIVE/GOTEE] DAN MACINTOSH~~

VENIA

FROZEN HANDS

There's a beautiful, emergent worship going down in hardcore music today, and I'd consider Venia a part of the revival. Fast paced and chant-a-liciouis, I can't wait to see the crowd participation in a *Frozen Hands* set, live. The album begs for it, and while the lyrics address issues of human frailty and spiritual depreciation ("Force Fed"'s "convictions lost countless times to heresy…," for example), there's a definite positivity (is this "posi-core?") that overrides, excites and motivates. "I swear we could tear down these walls… these walls that mask the youth!" While it's difficult to be entirely unique in this genre, Venia is tight and heavy, and they manage to stand out in the sea. HXC is about community, and perhaps they say it best: "Let's overcome this time! But by love, together as one, under his wing!" Start dancing. ~~[BLOOD & INK] LEVI MACALLISTER~~

INHALE EXHALE

BURY ME ALIVE

Three albums in, Inhale Exhale has managed to duck an identity. 2006's *The Lost. The Sick. The Sacred.* was a solid, if formulaic, debut. 2008's *I Swear…* kicked some of the accessibility in favor of experimentation and, ultimately, a more memorable sound. *Bury Me Alive* finds a band scarily close to breaking into the metalcore elite, waiting only for a fully crystallized identity to crash the upper echelon. Crushing instrumentals drive the weighty messages well on "Rooms" and "Did You Ever Have A Touch To Lose?," never allowing you to catch your breath. The moments when the sound is less thrash and more rock feel a bit schizo, leaving you unsure what's coming next, though "Condemned" utilizes the lull-you-to-sleep-then-hit-you-with-a-sledgehammer motif well. *Bury Me Alive* is certainly strongest at its heaviest, though it's never so soft as to be boring. ~~[SOLID STATE] COREY ERB~~

AUSTRIAN DEATH MACHINE

DOUBLE BRUTAL

Austrian Death Machine is metal's answer to emo's Reggie And The Full Effect: A solo side project from a respected band created for freedom of expression and comic relief while inadvertently delivering talented music. With help from a few friends (members of Unearth, Living Sacrifice, Death By Stereo) As I Lay Dying's frontman Tim Lambesis (and Arnold Schwarzenegger as the project's muse and alleged band member who contributes hilariously mocked commentary in between the tracks and even guttural vocals on certain songs) returns with a follow-up to the ADM debut *Total Brutal* with a double album titled, well, *Double Brutal*. The first disc focuses on tracks featuring famous quotes (as the sole lyrics) from movies that the infamous Arnold Schwarzenegger starred in (such as "I Need Your Clothes Your Boots And Your Motorcycle" – taken from *Terminator 2*). The second album delivers more fun with the Governator by covering metal classics from bands such as Judas Priest, Megadeth, and Motorhead. And just as promised, every ADM song features a circle pit tempo, moshing breakdowns and cliché angry vocals – all brutally approved. ~~[METAL BLADE] DAN FRAZIER~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
The Almost *Monster Monster*	03*	04
Flyleaf *Momento Mori*	04	04
Abel *The Honest Love EP*	03	04
Relient K *Forget And Not Slow Down*	03*	03
Venia *Frozen Hands*	03	04
Inhale Exhale *Bury Me Alive*	03*	04
Austrian Death Machine *Double Brutal*	04	04
David Crowder Band *Church Music*	03*	03
Dark Lay Still *Through Hell...*	04	01*
The Letter Black *Break The Silence*	02*	02
Ruth *The Covers EP*	03	03
We Shot The Moon *A Silver Lining*	03*	04
Photoside Cafe *The Beauty Of Innocence Remains*	03	02*
Megadeth *Endgame*	03	04
Blessthefall *Witness*	03	02
Telegraph Canyon *The Tide And The Current*	03*	03

DAVID CROWDER*BAND

DAVID CROWDER BAND

CHURCH MUSIC

A lot of people are going to hate this new David Crowder Band CD. Yes, you read that right: They'll hate it! Once longtime fans get a load of "Church Music – Dance[!]," they'll behave like diehard The Rolling Stones fans reacted to "Miss You," back when "real" rock aficionados feared that The Glimmer Twins had caved in to a bad musical trend of the '70s, and gone disco. Crowder hasn't slicked back his crazy hair and donned the white suit – at least not yet – but "Church Music – Dance[!]" can only be described as disco music. Furthermore, dance elements are all over the place, so be prepared to be surprised. But, much like the iconic Neil Young, Crowder is a unique artist. And that artistry always shines through, no matter the stylistic garb. Listening to any Crowder songs will make you want to better know this amazing God he exclusively sings about, whether he's focusing on God's abundant grace, as he does during "Oh, Happiness," or floored by God's unbelievable love, addressed with "We Are Loved." So, without a doubt, this rose (Crowder) by any other petal formation is always the same beautiful rose. If you're looking for guitar rock, however, be patient because "God Almighty, None Compares" scratches that electric six-string itch. This will likely not be many folks' favorite David Crowder Band CD. But if you give it half a chance, it may make you eventually want to get up and dance. ~~[SIXSTEP] DAN MACINTOSH~~

DARK LAY STILL

THROUGH HELL...

By leading their album *Through Hell…* with a piano prelude, El Cajon, CA's Dark Lay Still sets out to establish a unique ambience laced with tension, vehemence, and essence. And they would have succeeded if only the rest of the band had dynamics. As if a soundtrack to a slow-paced low-budget horror movie or the score to an eight-bit vampire hunter video game, the dark metal-inspired band plays their instruments in linear procession that sadly lacks range or evolution. Well, at least they did let keyboardist Johnny Valentine contribute another evocative solo track. ~~[BOMBWORKS] DAN FRAZIER~~

the letter black

THE LETTER BLACK

BREAK THE SILENCE

It's hard to escape the nagging feeling The Letter Black's *Break the Silence* is little more than dressed up generic hard rock. Vocalist Sarah Anthony is a powerful, Pat Benatar-esque singer, and you might call husband and guitarist, Mark Anthony, her Neil Geraldo. But these six songs, most of which praise new life in Christ, do not say anything that hasn't been said before, and better. Simply put, The Letter Black make solid, but unexceptional rock & roll. It's the musical equivalent to Spam, which is what you eat when you cannot find anything better. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] DAN MACINTOSH~~

RUTH
THE
COVERS
EP

RUTH

THE COVERS EP

Today's artists are either running out of original material or it's just becoming popular to reinvent old favorites. Either way, Ruth's *Covers* EP – the latest in line to emerge (after House of Heroes *Meets The Beatles*) – is either mighty or mildly interesting for fans, depending on their take on the overall concept. This collection features five tracks as diverse as "Fix You" by Coldplay, "Be With You" by Mr. Big and "Give Me One Reason" by Tracy Chapman. "Fix You" strips down to a simple acoustic arrangement with nice slide addition, but loses any epic qualities. Meanwhile, Buddy Holly's "Everyday" holds a great *Happy Days* vibe with interesting guitar tone choices. However, it's "Give Me One Reason" that stands out for its complete reinvention from the original, revealing Ruth's true creative potential. If every song could have experienced this type of transformation, *The Covers* would stand even taller. At the very least, it's interesting one way or another. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] MATT CONNER~~

WE SHOT THE MOON

WE SHOT THE MOON

A SILVER LINING

Jonathan Jones and company seem to have perfected the pop-rock formula. We Shot The Moon's second release, *A Silver Lining*, will be pleasingly familiar for fans of the former Waking Ashland frontman's silky croon. This time, there is a little less piano emphasis and a few instances where the guitars are allowed to drive, as on "Red Night." Well-placed harmonies remain one of the band's trademark assets, while lyrics remain relatable and range from second thoughts ("Should Have Been") to hope for change ("A Silver Lining"). Standout cuts include "Red Night," "Amy" and the title track. ~~[AFTERNOON] COREY ERB~~

PHOTOSIDE CAFE

THE BEAUTY OF INNOCENCE REMAINS

Innocence, indeed. Photoside Café is a simple concoction of typical lite rock. Just as the album artwork is muted in color with forest and moss greens, the music's sound is similar. Nothing about this album is offensively bad or unfortunate, but nothing intriguing or interesting is there, either. The lead singer, Naphtali Marshall, has a voice that is light with a slight raspiness to it, making it just as unobtrusive as the music. Some of this generic sound is, I think, owed to the production, though. For example, when there are some interesting guitar licks, they seem to be held back into the rest of the music and thus not allowed to be more boisterous than any other instrument being played. If the music had more texture, this album would definitely have more potential. And, some of the lyrical content is certainly topical and intriguing. One song, "Kill Your TV," speaks directly about the mind-numbing power television has over our generation, and "Don't Care" speaks of the general apathy in our world today. The passion the band has for music can certainly be felt, just not heard. If Photoside could just amp things up, they may have a shot. ~~[GRRR] KELLY KETTERING~~

MEGADETH
ENDGAME

MEGADETH

ENDGAME

One of the most anticipated releases has arrived in Megadeth's *End Game*. Arrive it does with a sonic onslaught that I thought disappeared following *Peace Sells*. A pedestrian metal attack this album isn't. Opening with a dynamic two-minute instrumental appropriately titled "Dialectic Chaos." That gets this train moving full blast. "Head Crusher" was only the beginning, but it plays ninth on the disc! Highlights include "This Day We Fight!," "1320" and the title track. Lots of fast songs, with a mix of heavy power metal. The production is crisp with an emphasis on in-your-face guitar play. Megadeth shows why their fan base is fanatical (including my two teenage sons 18, 16). A monumental album musically. Lyrically you'll find Dave's take on a variety of political and social ills. The U2 of heavy metal? However you view them, *Endgame* would be an upstanding addition to any headbanger's CD collection. ~~[ROADRUNNER] KEVEN CROTHERS~~

WITNESS
blessthefall

BLESSTHEFALL

WITNESS

Blessthefall, a quartet based out of Phoenix, have given us a pretty predictable record in *Witness*. It's almost like they tried to figure out what would get the most dancing in the pit and wrote the record with that in mind. In a genre as easy to pick on as screamo, you really have to think outside the box to make your record great – and blessthefall haven't done that. Good production, a label that gives you great press photos and an image; it's easy to sell a record to an impressionable high-schooler. It's unfortunate that they chose to follow the planned song structure making the record suffer as a whole, fitting into the same box that's always shipped out. To be fair, that's not to say blessthefall haven't written a solid record. The tracks are deep: I found myself listening back over parts of songs to try to figure out their instrumentation. There's definitely talent there. They're incredibly popular and *Witness* is a guaranteed seller – but there's no way this one lands itself in the "Best of the Genre" category. In fact, I doubt I'll put it back on after a few listens. ~~[FEARLESS] DAVID STAGG~~

TELEGRAPH
CANYON

TELEGRAPH CANYON

THE TIDE AND THE CURRENT

If you love the sound of Neil Young's voice, you'll doubly love Telegraph Canyon, because *The Tide and The Current* is filled with plenty of nasal-y singing. Produced by Centro-Matic's Will Johnson, this CD has a folk-country vibe that hearkens back to Laurel Canyon's musical heyday, actually, as traditional rock instruments are consistently augmented with banjo, mandolin and fiddle. These 10 songs create the aural equivalent to a relaxed lazy afternoon. Nature is clearly an inspiration, which is supported by song titles like "Into The Woods" and "Light In The Field." This music sure makes Telegraph Canyon sound like a great place to go and escape the hustle and bustle of city life. ~~[VELVET BLUE MUSIC] DAN MACINTOSH~~

CONFIDE

SHOUT THE TRUTH

Los Angeles's Confide erupts a blend of screamo trying to be held back on the ankle by metalcore. The quintet's vicious onslaught of breakdowns are hushed by drummer Joel Piper's melodic relief in an eerie blur similar to A Static Lullaby's debut *...And Don't Forget To Breathe* (except where A Static Lullaby seamlessly switched from the hurricane to the calm of the eye, Confide tends to get carried away and lost in the storm). A hardcore attempt at covering The Postal Service's breakaway hit "Such Great Heights" is accurate yet comical. But Confide isn't looking for laughs, they just want you to feel every song with them, and they make it hard not to. ~~[TRAGIC HERO] DAN FRAZIER~~

THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH

WELCOME TO THE MASQUERADE

Thousand Foot Krutch's new alum may be titled *Welcome To The Masquerade*, but they aren't masking anything on this record. While still maintaining their heavy rock sound, TFK has packed an even bigger punch than before with songs like "Bring Me To Life" and the title track, "Welcome to the Masquerade." Also including today's version of the power ballad in songs like "Watching Over Me," this new TFK album covers all the bases for fans of the group, new and old. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] KELLY KETTERING~~

GRAVE ROBBER

INNER SANCTUM

Inner Sanctum, the sophomore release of the shock rock band Grave Robber, leans toward a more serious side than their debut, *Be Afraid*. This endeavor leaves the gothic melodic metal sound and enters more into punk angst, yet they stay true to their roots using their dark, metaphysic themes and heavy, thick guitars. What we have is a fun CD with a strong message of hope and deliverance. With this release Grave Robber is coming of age. I look forward to hearing more from these folks of doom in the future. ~~[RETROACTIVE] MARK BLAIR GLUNT~~

MICHAEL ROE

WE ALL GONNA FACE THE RISING SUN

If The 77s' recent *Holy Ghost Building* CD made you want more of the same, only of the gentler, acoustic variety, Michael Roe's solo *We All Gonna Face the Rising Sun* will arrive like a new ray of sunshine in your world. "Come to the Saviour" shows off Roe's pretty vocal side, while "We Need More Rattlesnakes" is laugh-out-loud hilarious. Roe speaks the latter's lyric – which concerns a hillbilly clan that only poisonous snakes could bring to Jesus – in the shaky voice of a grizzled old storyteller. Roe does, however, rev it momentarily with plenty of blues guitar power during "Satan Your Kingdom Must Come Down." Granted, some of these lyrics are corny and simple. But Roe sings them with so much heartfelt sincerity that they come off truly touching most of the time. ~~[LO-FIDELITY] DAN MACINTOSH~~

SHERWOOD

QU

Sherwood's new, great Scrabble word-titled album, *QU*, is filled with many songs about growing up. Whether it is relationship troubles or unwillingly watching a beloved mother grow old ("Worn"), adulthood is never easy. Their usual beautiful melodies and vocal harmonies are still here, but Sherwood's latest songs also have a distinct '80s pop feel running through many of them. For instance, it wouldn't have seemed strange to hear "Not Gonna Love" on the radio back in 1986, right after, say, The Bangles' "Walk Like An Egyptian" or The Cure's "Close To Me." Yet, with all these bright pop songs, it's still a little like trying to put on a happy face, in order to hide a sad heart. Sadness can be veiled, but not for long. ~~[MYSPACE] DAN MACINTOSH~~

SOUL-JUNK

1960

Nobody's done this before? If so, my guess is that Soul-Junk's *1960* has bested anyone else's previous attempts to transform Psalm 119 into a stylistically diverse – yet cohesive – concept album. Toning down some of his more cacophonous impulses, S-J's Glen Galaxy and a bevy of the indieground's finest (including members of Danielson Familie) make tuneful ruminations about loving the Lord's law out of the Bible's longest chapter. Eschewing his band's noisier guitar (mostly) and turntable (entirely) elements leaves room for occasional classical strings, marimba and other surprises in what's arguably the Junk's most earnest effort. Angular, nearly goth post-punkiness a la early Cure mixes it up with All Saved Freak Band-styled artiness, minimalist folkiness and even what could be called indie art-damage metal. And just when things even barely threaten to become just a touch samey along Galaxy's and King David's stroll through the Hebrew alphabet, another curveball's thrown to make this hour-plus experience compelling. If previous exposures to S-J's distinct artistry have been too extreme for your tastes, this accessible, ambitious project could be the place to jump into their world. ~~[SOUNDS FAMILYRE] JAMIE LEE RAKE~~

MANIC DRIVE

BLUE

Manic Drive consistently dances around easy categorization during its new *Blue* CD. Dance music elements inform many of these tracks, although nothing beat-oriented makes the group sound like anything other than a hard rock band. With "Dancefloor," the group is at its funkiest, although club elements can be found nearly everywhere else. The group turns off the flashy lights momentarily for "Rain," which is a wonderful worship song. And with "December Mourning," Manic Drive may have created the saddest Christmas song this side of Randy Stonehill's "Christmas At Denny's." *Blue* is the perfect CD for any hard rocker that wants to feed his or her inner dance music fan, without any guilt. ~~[WHIPLASH] DAN MACINTOSH~~

SUFJAN STEVENS

THE BQE

Should it have been evident by the compositional complexity of his past couple albums? Sufjan Stevens, freak folkie teller of morality tales chronicling U.S. history, comes out as an art music composer (i.e., classical). *The BQE* revisits Stevens' interest in geography, as this soundtrack to the artist's same-named film comprises an aural interpretation of New York City's Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Figuring Hoola Hoops, an Indonesian post-Buddhist/Hindu sect and the synthesis of myriad other ideas into this manifestation of Richard Wagner's idea for a total work of art, and one's initial response might range from "Wow!" to "Huh?" Based on the music – which is all we have to go on at this writing – this is about as impressive as it is ambitious, syncretizing various 20th century U.S. classical strains, English intelligent techno, perhaps even echoes of industrial and marching band sounds. CD and LP packages come with separate elements of the total overall masterwork, so the full experience demands both. Sneaky way for an eccentric rising star to sell more units or a necessary way to manage an enormous vision? Ah, yes. ~~[ASTHMATIC KITTY] JAMIE LEE RAKE~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Confide *Shout The Truth*	04	03*
Thousand Foot Krutch *Welcome To The Masquerade*	03*	03*
Grave Robber *Inner Sanctum*	04	03
Michael Roe *We All Gonna Face The Rising Sun*	03	03*
Sherwood *QU*	03	03
Soul-Junk *1960*	04	04
Manic Drive *Blue*	03	03
Sufjan Stevens *The BQE*	04	05
Down Here *How Many Kings: Songs For Christmas*	03	03
Bride *Tsar Bomba*	03	04
Ultimatum *Lex Metalis*	03	01
Rodent Emporium *Sports*	02*	03
Switchfoot *Hello Hurricane*	04	
Future Of Forestry *Travel II*	04	03
Advent *Naked And Cold*	04	04
Oh, Sleeper *Son Of The Morning*	03*	03

DOWNHERE

HOW MANY KINGS: SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS

Unless you were raised by Jehovah's Witnesses and this whole Christmas deal is still foreign to you, the first thing to do with contemporary holiday recordings is skip right to the fresh tracks. With *How Many Kings: Songs for Christmas*, Downhere has given us a few fine originals, along with other familiar traditional tunes. During the title track, Downhere puts Christmas into its proper perspective: "And how many gods have poured out their hearts / To romance a world that is torn apart." Another original, "Gift Carol," describes Christmas as follows: "Sealed in hopeful promise / For every doubting Thomas." Lastly, "Christmas In Our Hearts" revives the Grinch show's truth, that "Even if nobody said, 'Merry Christmas!' we'd still have Christmas in our hearts." Of course, we also get Downhere versions of "Silent Night" and "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" included in the deal. So whether you want something old or something new, you'll be satisfied with what Downhere has to put under the tree. ~~[CENTRICITY] DAN MACINTOSH~~

BRIDE

TSAR BOMBA

Here comes the Bride … with "the bomb!" While 2006's *Skin for Skin* heralded a return to the heavy (almost metal) side, it felt "heavy-handed" and a bit one-dimensional. Honestly, I didn't have any expectation good or bad for this new release. Surprisingly, not only are Jerry McBroom (early years) and Steve Osbourne (really early years) back, so is the passion, the sincerity, the killer grooves, the melodies, the diversity and the overall great songwriting. With the exception of the awkward opener "Industrial Christ," there is not a weak tune here. From the semi-reggae tune "We Are Together" to the Zeppelinesque "Love Shine" to the heavy-hitting "Separate" or the Alice Cooperish, slightly progressive "Never," this just "feels" more like the Bride of old. "Grace I want to hold you / Grace I want to know you." Yes, swan song or not, this is – without a doubt – the most enjoyable, highest quality release from these guys since *Snakes*. ~~[RETROACTIVE] JONATHAN SWANK~~

Lex Metalis

ULTIMATUM

LEX METALIS

In every mediocre-sized city, in every state (or province), there is a collection of washed-out musicians who climb on a stage in a dimly lit, never-cleaned dive bar and attempt to cover songs by the metal bands they've worshipped since before they could drive. In this case, the band is Ultimatum, the place is Albuquerque, New Mexico, and somehow they managed to make a recording of their sludgy thrash cover songs into an album, titled *Lex Metalis*. And it's a pity that their ability to play their instruments decently is overshadowed by their desecrated-beyond-recognition versions of songs by Metallica, Megadeth and Motorhead. Let's just say don't expect a lot of royalty checks to be cut. ~~[RETROACTIVE] DAN FRAZIER~~

RODENT EMPORIUM
SPORTS

RODENT EMPORIUM

SPORTS

Do not confuse this album with the 1984 *Sports* by Huey Lewis & The News. The *Sports* of Rodent Emporium brings its influences straight out of '90s pop and punk, with a fairly equal distribution of the two. A little gritty and a little silly, this album's songs have titles such as "Grumpy Guts" and "Everybody Says You're Ugly." There are also no spiritual references to speak of. But, if you are already a fan of post-pubescent pop, this will be a decent addition to your collection. Otherwise it is an easy record to dismiss. ~~[RAGING STORM] KELLY KETTERING~~

switchfoot

SWITCHFOOT

HELLO HURRICANE

This doesn't really sound like a Switchfoot album. Sure, there's no mistaking Jon Foreman's trademark voice, but the material here jumps around like a bloody compilation! It's as if the band collectively wired up their iPods to chart out their course. A few obvious stops would be: "Yet," which has the kind of line-by-line vocal delivery Bono might give a U2 song; "Your Love Is A Song" sounds like it could have been written for a girl singer. In fact, there's a lot of similarities to the Joan Osborne song, "One of Us." Having said that, it's a fantastic tune that could have a long life on the radio. The songs "Free" and the title track both have a slight Americana vibe, not unlike Arcade Fire, the latter of which sounds like a deadringer to AF's "Keep the Car Running" tune, with that "oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-whoa-oh-oh" intro. And there's an electronic drumroll cadence at the end of "Red Eyes" that's reminiscent of MUTEMATH. Though this is the point where the critic complains about Switchfoot not deciding who they want to be, I'd be lying if I said I didn't like the results. Stylistically diverse or not, this is a really good album and a mighty fine listen from start to finish. The frenetic pace of "Mess of Me" is a perfect example of a composition merging the message with the medium. It's about making a mess of your life and musically it's very chaotic and scattered. After the initial shock wears off, it's simply obvious that the band has delivered a quality album here. ~~[SPARROW] DOUG VAN PELT~~

FUTURE OF FORESTRY
TRAVEL II

FUTURE OF FORESTRY

TRAVEL II

It only makes sense to include a song titled "Set Your Sails" on an EP called *Travel II*. The Future Of Forestry disc's cover – which was painted by Tamara Owyoung, frontman Eric Owyoung's wife – even prominently features a sailing ship, front and center. Sonically and lyrically, Future Of Forestry oftentimes sounds like The Decemberists – albeit without all the songs about death. With its liberal use of acoustic guitars and chimes, much of this music has a magical quality to it. It leaves the listener with an undeniable sense of wanderlust, which is more than likely intentional. ~~[CREDENTIAL] DAN MACINTOSH~~

ADVENT

NAKED AND COLD

I really wanted to like Advent's sophomore release *Naked and Cold* before hearing it, and even with inflated expectations, I'd recommend you buy it. Seriously, they're a roller coaster of a ride on this one. Given a fairly common (and what I think should die altogether) instrumental "noise" intro track, their first real song "Nothing" started off with a sound I hadn't heard all the time: The production was a bit more raw than I had heard recently, the songwriting was different than I had heard lately, their movements and breakdowns didn't follow patterns I had been over-exposed to. I loved that while listening to "Revival" (the middle child of tracks on the record) I couldn't figure out where they were going. I loved that during "Overcome" it felt like I had listened to eight different tracks in three minutes. What some are calling the re-birth of the incredible band Beloved, Advent should be on your What to Watch For list. ~~[SOLID STATE] DAVID STAGG~~

OH, SLEEPER

SON OF THE MORNING

Texas boys Oh, Sleeper have done a decent job on their sophomore release, *Son of the Morning* – a concept album that hits the mark musically, but seems to be wrapped up in a genre that's either dying or losing respect. The record itself is musically and dynamically possessed: Oh, Sleeper have written a pop record for fans of closet pop-lovers. The melodies are there enough to sing along to, the breakdowns are there for the kids to go nuts to at the show, and the songwriting itself provides a perfect blueprint to an incredible live show. The band knows what's popular in their genre and has written a great record that will please those fans. Unfortunately, the genre is a little tired. For example, listen to the breakdown that closes out "The New Breed." By itself, it's an incredible piece of work. If it had been surrounded by more off-timing rhythms and a little less predictable song structure, the band might be moving themselves to a more distinct plateau. While the band excels at what they do (their songwriting dynamics are definitely a strong point), I'm looking for a band to break that mold in any way possible to separate them; right now, they could be any number of bands in their genre. For fans of Underoath. ~~[SOLID STATE] DAVID STAGG~~

The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Nineteenth)

For some time, we've been exploring the question of why millions of American Evangelicals have failed to make much quality art of any sort, and have seen that this is largely because of limited (or distorted) views of Scripture's teachings (or a failure to act on or consider the implications of the things they do know from it), even though the Bible instructs believers in "every good work" (2 Tim. 3: 16-17), which includes making art.

We've looked at some destructive aspects of shallow or distorted views of the Doctrines of Creation and Eschatology. We also lately turned to a consideration of the artistic damage wrought by a sub-Scriptural view of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as a rejection or misunderstanding the Three Persons of the One God destroys all possibility of Biblical justification in seeking symbols as both revealing multiple meanings and simultaneously unifying those varied meanings.

A denigration of the Triune Mystery inevitably leads to confusion concerning the reflected mystery in men, who are created in the Image of the Mysterious Triune God, which reduces men to simplistic machines subject to quick-fix techniques.

This results in a flattened view of man and the world, reducing humanity to a uni-dimensional construct made for one mode of being, instead of the nuanced, complex, multi-orbed creature and Reality God created for mankind to reflect God within.

We saw this illustrated in the last couple of articles by the example of the rejection of a Scripturally-sound song (deemed by all involved as artistically-advanced) by a Christian record label on the basis of it not having a "happy ending," a rejection undergirded by a uni-dimensional view of man and the world which deemed that God wanted humans to be only happy rather than holy, as those who, in a fallen world, should also experience sorrow, lamentation, and repentance for their sin, as well as sharing in Christ's Sufferings (1 Peter 4: 12-19; 2 Cor. 7: 8-11).

The Word of God, though, overwhelmingly concerns itself with the relationship and experience of God and His Covenant People, and reflects in that nexus not only happiness and joy, but also fear, sorrow, suffering, repentance, guilt, duty, malediction, and holy terror as normative in a fallen world.

All of these categories of human experience are reflected not only in the narrative parts of the Bible, but also in the lamentation, sorrow, sacrifice, and hope represented the prayers, proverbs, and psalms of Scripture, in the apocalyptica (symbolic prophetic writings), prescriptions of the Law, and the Epistles of the New Testament (a number of which were written from prison and/or by men who were eventually martyred).

The Complex and Holy God Who deals with His complex and fallen creature, mankind, utilizes all created things, whether fallen or not, to reveal Himself in His Persons or Aspects (Gen. 1; Ps. 19; Rom. 1: 19-21).

This means that all these categories of existence (which God uses to reveal Himself to men) are revelatory, communicate the meanings the Creator-God gives them, to His Image-Bearers, mankind. These aspects of Reality, which accurately reflect God's Created Meanings, are all thus useful and necessary to fulfill God's Purposes in Reality; thus, all history in all its aspects, is revelatory, speaking accurately to men in all their states of being.

God uses all of mankind's experience to reveal Himself and accomplish His Purposes, call men to Himself, convict, correct, etc., and therefore the full range of man's experience is meant to lead God's People (those who know Him) to holiness, to be like God, to be sanctified within their fallen states, and thus the experience of men (redeemed and otherwise) is necessary, and accurately reflects Reality (which is why these varied categories are present in Scripture).

Though final joy and full happiness await the redeemed at time's end, the Fall is real and radical, and fallen man experiences the world in light of this, whether redeemed or unregenerate. All men, Christian or pagan, know this varied experience, and to attempt to depict a Reality which is not faithful to Scriptural categories is both to deny the witness of Holy Writ and to lead the unregenerate to consider Christianity escapist, irrelevant, and false. Our art must reflect God's Truth, or deservedly be seen as untrue and irrelevant.

[kempercrabb.net]

The way I see it
Chris Wighaman

I am at a music festival; a Christian music festival. It is a little strange, every band that has played has promised to rock my face off. The Skillet lead singer went into great detail of how my face would be "rocked off." They then went on to put on a very good show, but when I checked my face periodically I found it in the same place as when they had begun. Not one band fulfilled that promise until Disciple took the stage [and, yes, it happened much like the Skillet guy described].

There are many stages, bands, booths, merchandise hawkers, over-priced water sales, corn dogs, first-aid stations, screaming teenage girls as well as older men screaming like teenage girls. Then there are the inevitable and prolific "Christian" T-Shirts. I saw "His Pain Your Gain", "body piercing saved my life", "got Jesus?", "HisWay" in the form of a fast food chain logo and so on. These shirts usually give me pause. Actually they usually make me throw up a little bit in my mouth. They are so cheesy and over-the-top. There is nothing subtle about them. As I watched the masses move to the music in their Christian-branded garb; I struggled. Do I hate these shirts because they are cheesy [they undeniably are] or because they leave no room for "Christian Anonymity" [hmmm, probably].

In Romans Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the good news of Christ, because it is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. Paul puts it out there with no reservations. His faith in Christ is blatant and bold. The way Paul lived his life was so full of talking/preaching/reasoning and action, but always with one thing at the forefront: faith in Christ. His message was about the life-redeeming power of faith in Christ. His actions were a reflection of his belief in the Christ. He reminds his readers in Corinthians that the only thing he brought to them was Christ. It was in Christ's Name, not in His or anyone else's, they were baptized. I don't know if Paul would have worn a "Pick Jesus" shirt, but I do know there was little question as to what the driving force of his life was. As the day wraps up I've debated in my head throughout and I would have to say the shirts sicken me a little less. For me, my hope is that in my life Christ would be so central that no matter what I do or say that the good news of Christ will be shared. I do not want to seek anonymity in my faith, but instead always be bold, because, of course, "Hii Saved Me" [insert mental picture of little Wii Jesus here, on black t-shirt, which can be picked up for $15.99 at your local Christian Bookstore].

Devotions
with Greg Tucker

What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah.
—Psalm 89:48

Selah is a little understood Hebrew word that means "stop and listen," and as a public speaker I certainly understand the power of the pause. A moment of silence allows an idea to sink in before more information is added, and 71 times in your Bible the psalmist makes a statement, then asks us to stop and listen. Selah.

In September I joined HM publisher Doug Van Pelt and fellow columnist Chris Wighaman at Revelation Generation, one of the nation's largest Christian music festivals. With the nearest Starbucks 20 miles away, my wakeup arrived when REV/GEN's massive tents and Woodstock-sized staging burst into view, impressing me how a remote piece of ground in the rolling hills of New Jersey could be so perfectly transformed into a, …a what? Bob and Kim Grom's property was no longer a horse farm; it had become a temple. People came to worship.

HM Magazine sponsored my favorite stage, and for two glorious days we heard about Christ from Emery, Underoath, Norma Jean, The Devil Wears Prada, and more. Hundreds of readers stopped by our booth to say hello, including hardcore fans like Bethanne Ciaccio, Raymond Sweet, and John Richardson. Over 50 artists performed between four stages, and by the time Switchfoot shut off the lights and closed the door, 30,000 of us had been inspired, motivated, stirred, healed and challenged. And then… Selah.

After a trip to the Mountain — whether it's a life-changing Skillet concert, church on Sunday, or ten minutes in the Good Book each morning — it's wise to take a moment for reflection.

"What did God say to me?"
"What does he want me to do now?"
"Where do I go from here?"

Since it's not how high we jump but how straight we walk after we hit the ground that counts, make note that forward motion seems best when it follows a pause.

Selah.

[Greg Tucker Greg Tucker is president of Tucker Signature Films in Beverly Hills. You can meet him at the TuckerG@mac.com]

PICK OF THE LITTER

Conspiracy of Thought

This LA industrial-influenced metal band mixes dark samples and tracks alongside heavy nu-metal riffs in a way that actually sounds fresh in 2009. High quality production and a good voice really helps. Ben Stewart delivers in the vocal department, but also handles duties with guitars, keyboards and sequencing. Each member of this quartet, actually, has a full plate of responsibilities: Guitarist Devanand Bassando also plays keyboards and adds backing vocals and more sequencing; drummer Tony Vasquez brings a collection of electronic percussion samples; and bassist Michael Parshall does some vocals and "guitar demolition." A good friend of mine with similar musical taste saw these guys tear it up at Cornerstone and immediately bought all three of their independently-released albums, which means they made quite an impression. Lyrically, you could say this band is "aware," as songs like "Blowback" and "The Plan" both fire off like an angry Rage Against The Machine, with a fiery rap/rant meets geography and history lesson. The band expands into the visual with a video for their latest title track ("Nothing More Than Light"). (Doug Van Pelt)

myspace.com/conspiracyofthought

The Last Hope

Fun-loving old-school punk. Raw, but textured. Reminiscent of Flatfoot 56 or Dropkick Murphys (especially the chant-along "Brick By Brick").

thelasthope.us

Autumn's Descent

Melodic yet chunky metal a la Red, Tool, Chevelle.

autumnsdescent.com

K[nine]

They sound like they're going to kill you with their aggressive (Demon Hunter-esque) music, and they've got the tones and chops to do it.

k9noise.com

Frisbee

Classy chill acoustic music that's part pop, part jazzy. Totally top-notch.

frisbeemusic.com

Icris & Crucified

This is a team made up of two noteworthy hip-hop artists – Icris and Crucified (not the hardcore band) – who make some good rhymes on their own, but together they've got an aggressive vibe and smooth flow.

myspace.com/balancealbum

The Radiance Effect

Clean, infectious and almost-too-polished melodic rock.

theradianceeffect.com

J Sky Walker

This New York area hip-hop artist has an awesome sound and production on his *Loud* album. Tunes like "Jesus 4 President" are fast and aggressive.

myspace.com/jskywalkermusic

☆ Eastern Block

This Nashville band knows how to marry an atmospheric sound with a good hook-filled song. Obviously inspired by the current crop of organic piano rock (Muse, Coldplay), but carving out their own melodic sound.

myspace.com/easternblockmusic

Before We Sleep

Pleasant vocals meets mutated screaming. In other words, a lot like the screamo you hear a lot of today. Done w/ equal measures of sweet sing-along melodies & bone-crunching riffs. Sad thing ... they just broke up.

myspace.com/beforewesleep

Magnolia Sons

Super clean piano rock that emphasizes vocals over a laid-back rhythm base and chiming, atmospheric yet bluesy guitars.

myspace.com/magnoliasons

The Everyday Visuals

A quartet emphasizing singer/songwriter tunes. Real good and plenty slow. Varied influences might include John Lennon, Sufjan Stevens and Terry Taylor. Interesting song, "Heal Me," shares disillusionment with God, a doctor and a girl. hmmm...

theeverydayvisuals.com

So Long Forgotten

This 5-piece band (one of the first on Come&Live Records) draws easy comparisons to mew/outYou w/swirling crescendos & dynamic vocals.

myspace.com/solongforgotten

Divided By Friday

Imagine Relient K vocals and lyrical wit with Emery-style musical arrangements and muscular rock power chords.

myspace.com/dividedbyfriday

LIFE ON MARS
The Complete Series

LIFE ON MARS: THE COMPLETE SERIES

Being able to carefully watch the pilot episode again doesn't offer a lot more understanding to this delightful series than one might think, but the bonus material does unlock more mysteries from this adapted-from-a-BBC-television-series. [ABC Studios] *Doug Van Pelt*

[Cuss: 14 | Gore: 3 | Sex: 6 | Spiritual Conversations: 90]

AUDIENCE OF ONE

This is a fascinating and cringe-inducing documentary on an indie Christian film company (called WYSIWYG) that sets out to create an epic sci-fi movie. While handled gently, it's almost hard to watch. [Indiepix] *DV*

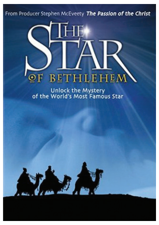
[Cuss: 0 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 100]

CREATION WAS EASY.
FILMMAKING IS HARD.
AUDIENCE OF ONE

THE BOARD

In the spirit of *Facing The Giants* and *Fireproof*, the creative technical team at Bethesda Baptist Church put together their own short 40-minute film that dramatizes and expounds upon the personal inner turmoil that transpires when someone might consider surrendering to Christ. A board room discussion involving characters named Heart, Mind, Will, Memory, Conscience and Emotion present their case concerning the upcoming decision. Quaint and well-done for a small group discussion, but not a big screen entertainment winner. [Bethesda Baptist Church] *DV*

[Cuss: 0 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 100]



THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

This glorified lecture on the astrological phenomenom and mystery based around the Star of Bethlehem is well-paced and softly presented in a way that is surprisingly watchable. Not very exciting when competing with Action/Adventure movies, but a good use of technology and speaking that engages the curiosity and doesn't insult the intelligence of the viewer. [MPower Pictures] *DV*

[Cuss: 0 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 100]

K-box
Kerchoonz.com

K-BOX

This little gadget is amazing. It's a heavy little device that's about the size of a mini-cassette recorder or first-generation iPod. The sound is huge for its size, though. This gel-bottom device basically turns any surface into a nice-sounding (and booming) audio speaker. Your desktop, countertop, cartop, front porch, rib cage all spread its low-frequency loveliness throughout its structure. I even used it outdoors on a construction project, and the empty handsaw case did a great job of amplifying the tuneage. It powers via a 20-hour-usage battery (that recharges via an included USB cable) and connects to your iPod or other music device via an included 3.5mm cable. This is truly a great gadget to get a little stoked about. [kerchoonz.com] *Doug Van Pelt*

[Setup Ease: A+ | Performance: A+ | Price: $74]

VEGGIETALES IPHONE APP

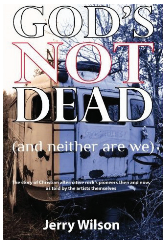
Let's face it: half the apps available for the iPhone are just cute little gimmicks designed for a few laughs. This little app will play the VeggieTales theme song with your name, allow you to spin Bob & Larry around, who tell you, "Doug, that was great!" The best part is the tap & play tuba playing, though. [fundane.com/veggietales] *DV*

[Setup Ease: A+ | Performance: B | Price: $2.99]

ROADTRIP WITH SMARTSCAN & TUNE FLEX AUX W/SMART CLICK

Griffin has two solutions for playing your iPhone or iPod in your car, charging it while displaying it in a flexible "gooseneck" stand about 10" from the auxillery jack. One method uses a wireless FM frequency and the other via an aux input. The FM method will have you changing stations while travelling, while the AUX method rules. [griffintechnology.com] *DV*

[Setup Ease: B- / A+ | Performance: B+ / A | Price: $99 / $39]



GOD'S NOT DEAD | JERRY WILSON

A reunion concert with Undercover, Altar Boys, Crumbacher, 441 and The Choir brought all these legendary Southern California alt-rockers together for a special night of music and fellowship. It also got this cynical writer (Jerry Wilson) to re-evaluate the Christian rock scene that these players (the "third wave" perhaps) pioneered, which turned into a book with 26 in-depth interviews with these great artists and others (like Terry Taylor, Mike Roe, Joe Taylor, Steve Hindalong, and even members of Barnabas and Veil of Ashes). While the interviews don't all transition well into each other, the collection of heart-thoughts is invaluable, as many of these artists share their faith, disillusionment and (for most) healing. [goldfishandclowns.com] *DV*

HM
it's free!
Podcast

Advertise in HM Magazine
Contact Doug Van Pelt for packages from internet to print to podcast
[FOR INDIE BANDS + LABELS]
p: 512.989.7309
e: advertising@hmmag.com

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD BROADCAST™
FULLARMORRADIO.COM
"The Radio Show Satan Fears Most!"
In Partnership With:
WOG
www.WheelsOfGrace.com
Burn Rubber,, Not Your Soul!

CHRISTIAN HARD ROCK & HEAVY METAL PODCAST

ANVIL HAMMER

Do Not Remain Silent
-Wayne and Brandon

New Legend series
with Charlie Daniels
Podcast # 43

Upcoming podcasts feature
the following bands:
Hope Kills Fear, I Am Alpha & Omega,
Thieves & Liars, Orphan Project,
Fellow, Decyfer Down, Doubledge,
Disciple and more...

SUBSCRIBE NOW AT ITUNES OR DOWNLOAD AT
HTTP://PODCAST.ANVILANDTHEHAMMER.COM

DOWNLOAD FREE EP AT WWW.HARVESTBLOOM.NET
Download Free Podcast #41 Anvil and the Hammer from iTunes

HARVEST BLOOM

FEMALE FRONTED GUITAR DRIVEN ROCK

ARISE™
apparel
wear the word.
Arise
ariseapparel.com

HM MERCH

I ♥ HM
THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE

Girly Shirt – $15.99

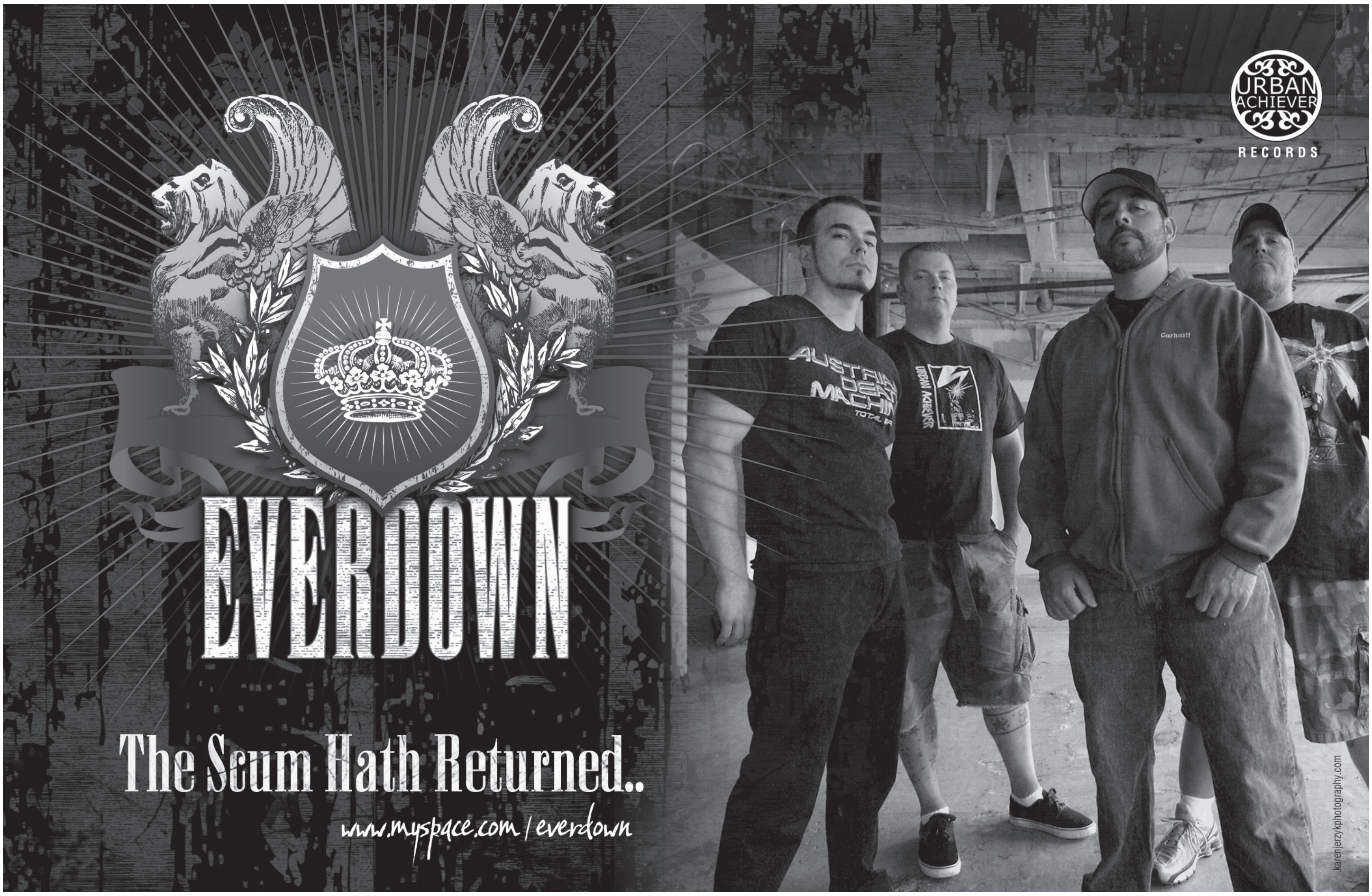
EST. 1985
AUSTIN, TX
HM

Austin Shirt – $15.99
Austin ziphood – $29.99

HM WORSHIP AT FULL VOLUME.

WAFV Shirt – $10.99
+ more at **hmmag.com**

Skins for mp3 players, gaming gear, notebooks – available at musicskins.com/hmmag


URBAN ACHIEVER RECORDS

EVERDOWN

The Scum Hath Returned..

www.myspace.com / everdown

karenjerzykphotography.com

HAWAII's ALTERNATIVE ROCK BAND...

LUTHER-N

AUSTRALIA's DARK-WAVE METAL BAND...

TEMPLAR

LATEST RELEASES AVAILABLE THRU

LUTHER-N DOGMATICS

TEMPLAR DARK CIRCUS

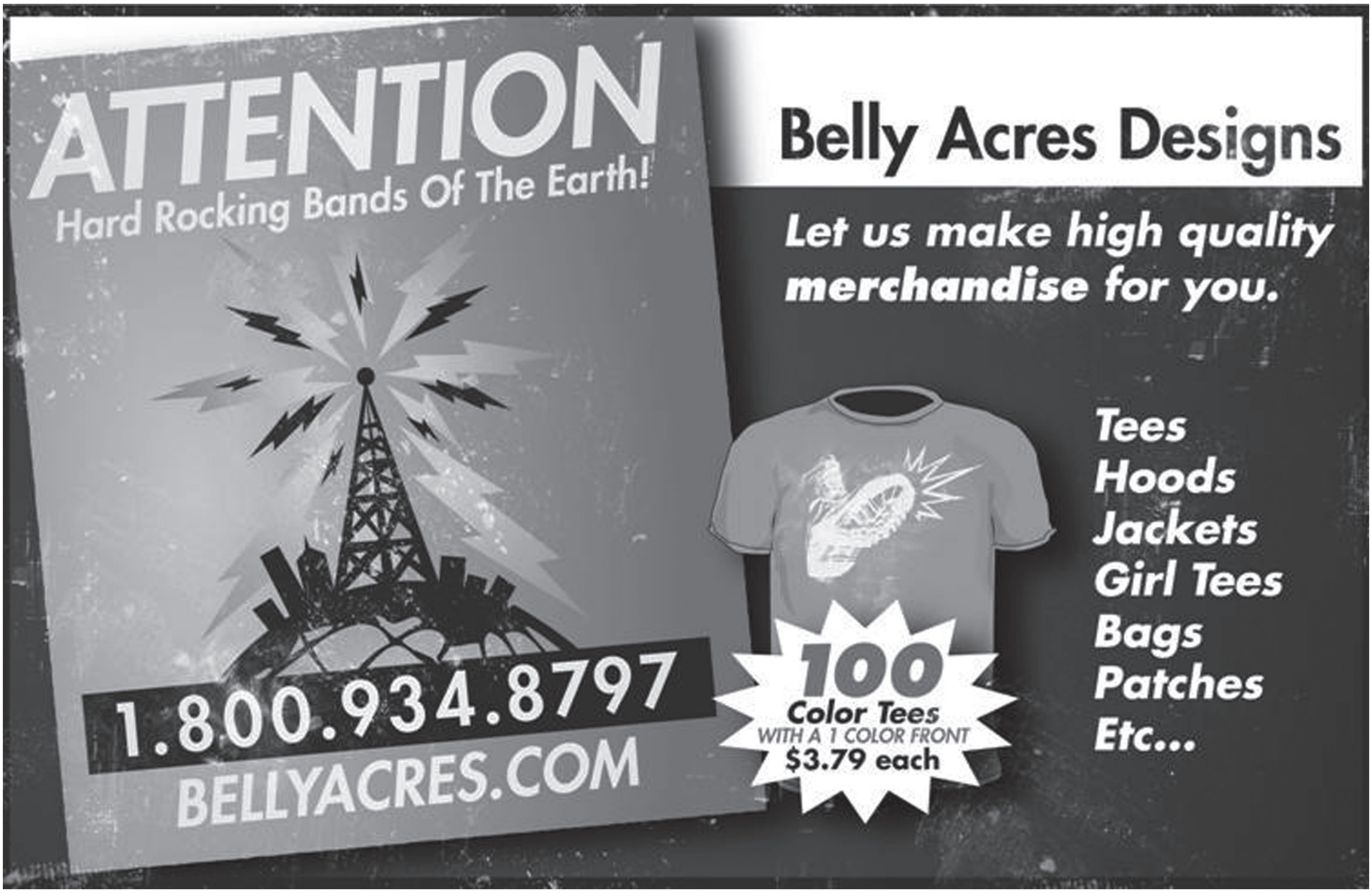
YOUNGSIDE RECORDS XS GROOVECORE HARD ROCK INDUSTRIAL METALCORE

www.myspace.com/luthernband

www.myspace.com/templarmuzic

YOUNGSIDE RECORDS

8961 Springwood Ct., Bonita Springs, FL 34135 USA + www.youngside.com + info@youngside.com + 1(239)989-2059



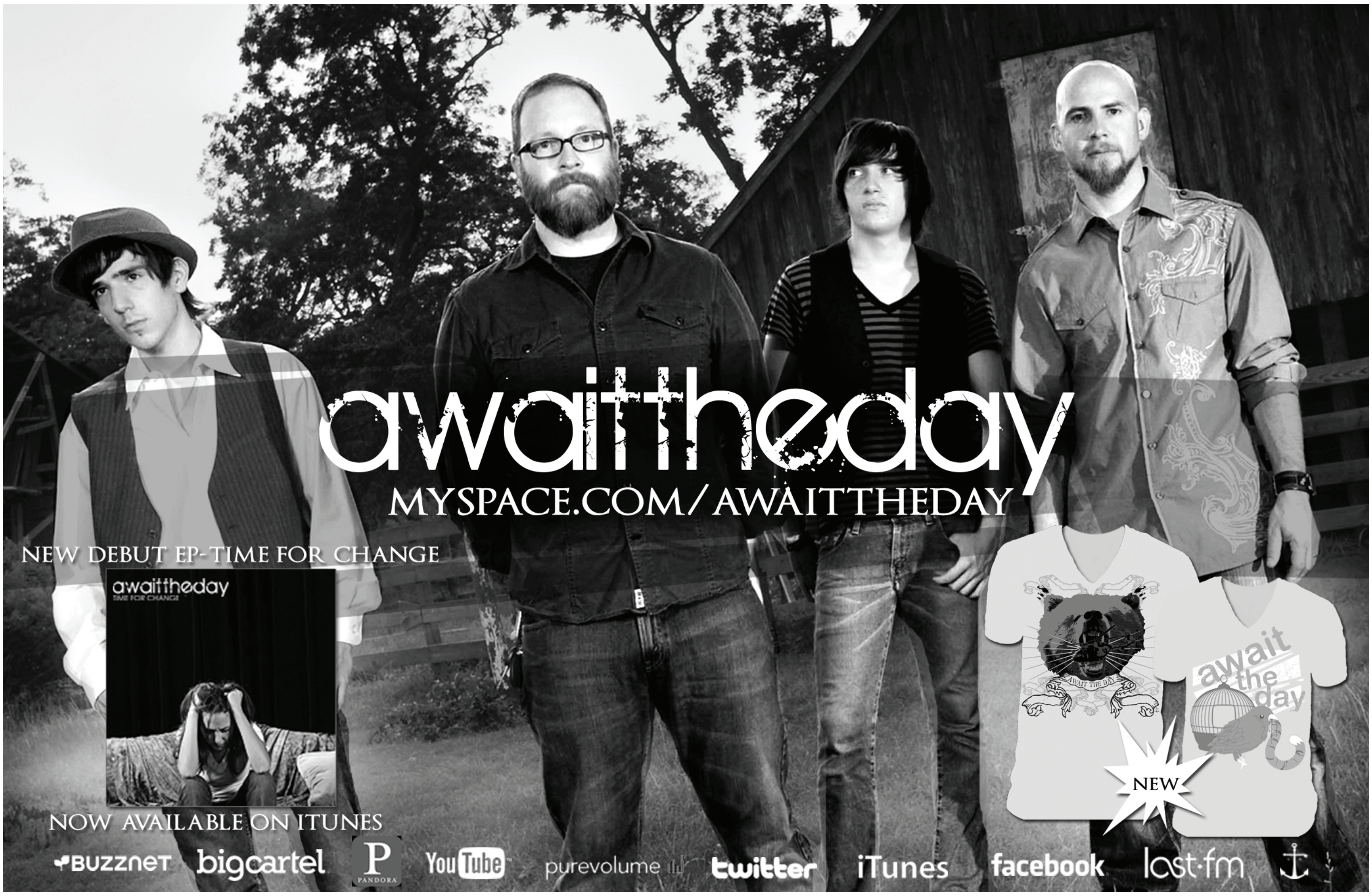
ATTENTION
Hard Rocking Bands Of The Earth!
1.800.934.8797
BELLYACRES.COM

Belly Acres Designs

Let us make high quality merchandise for you.

100 Color Tees
WITH A 1 COLOR FRONT
$3.79 each

Tees
Hoods
Jackets
Girl Tees
Bags
Patches
Etc...



awaittheday
MYSPACE.COM/AWAITTHEDAY

NEW DEBUT EP-TIME FOR CHANGE
awaittheday
TIME FOR CHANGE
NOW AVAILABLE ON ITUNES

NEW

BUZZNET bigcartel PANDORA YouTube purevolume twitter iTunes facebook last.fm

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA’S NEW HOT BUZZ

A LIGHT IN AUGUST

A LIGHT IN AUGUST IS A NEW AND UP-AND-COMING SCREAMO BAND FROM LODI, CALIFORNIA. COMING FROM VARIOUS MUSICAL BACKGROUNDS, THIS BAND SHOWS A LOT OF VERSATILITY TO THEIR NOW POPULAR SCENE. WITH MELODIC MUSIC AND WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS “BRUTAL” SCREAMS, THIS BAND PLANS TO SHOW A NEW FACE TO THE SCREAMO/INDIE SCENE.

Nate List – Guitar
Stephen Perrish – Programing clean vocals
Colton Bickford – Screams
Anthony Lynch – Drums
Doug Sheldon – Guitar
James Garner – Bass

PHOTO: MICHAEL ISH.COM myspace.com/ishphotography

THE FIRM AGENCY
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/THEFIRMAG

MYSPACE.COM/ALIGHTINAUGUSTMUSIC

Relient k
Relient k
Forget and not slow down

Forget And Not Slow Down
In Stores and Online Now
relientk.com MONO VS STEREO **monovsstereo.com**

Also available from Mono Vs Stereo & Gotee Records

Deas Vail
BIRDS & CAGES

DEAS VAIL
Birds & Cages
deasvail.com

$3.99
iTunes
ABANDON KANSAS
WE'RE ALL GOING SOMEWHERE

ABANDON KANSAS
We're All Going Somewhere
abandonkansaslovesyou.com

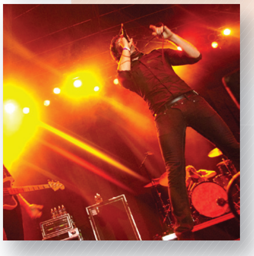
john reuben
SEX, DRUGS AND SELF-CONTROL

JOHN REUBEN
Sex, Drugs & Self-Control
johnreuben.com

Gotee RECORDS | **gotee.com**

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW & SAVE $!

Rev. Gary Davis
1896-1972
Blind Willie Johnson



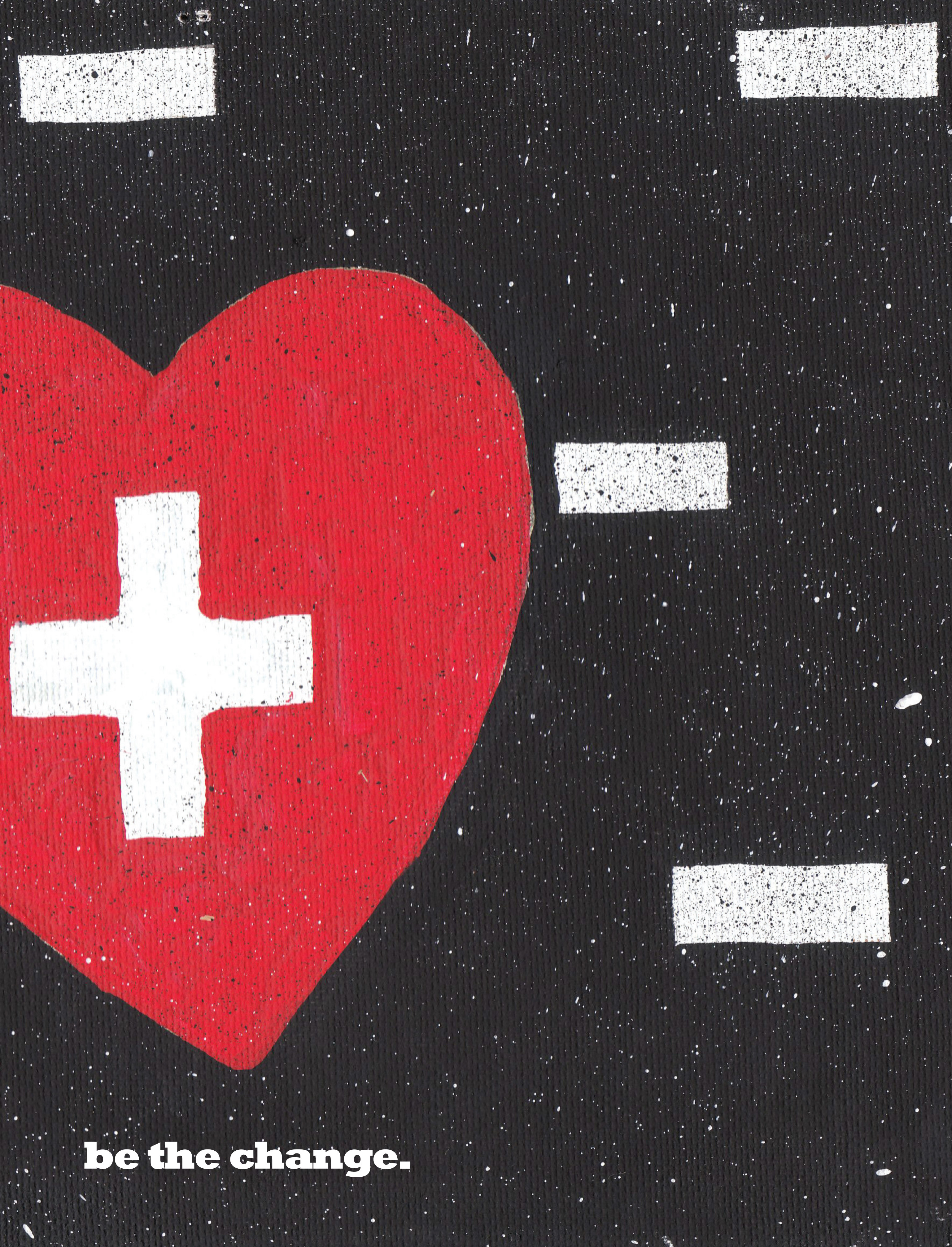
20,000 PEOPLE
300 BANDS
SKATE PARK
FILM FESTIVAL
BEACH
ART
DANCE CLUB
ORGANIZED SPORTS
625 ACRES OF CAMPING
200 HOURS OF SEMINARS

CORNERSTONE 20TEN

BUSHNELL, ILLINOIS JUNE 28 - JULY 3

Attention Generator stage operators: Please pre-register asap as we have big plans for Monday & Tuesday

WWW.CORNERSTONEFESTIVAL.COM



be the change.